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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a 2-year collaborative effort by the Illinois State Board of Education and 2 independent evaluators to assess early childhood programs in various sites throughout Illinois, and to provide models for other schools or community programs developing and expanding services for young children. The evaluation components consisted of expert reviews on five dimensions chosen to provide evidence that the programs under evaluation would be viable in other areas within the state: (1) program description, including philosophy and goals; (2) description of the practice, including services provided and costs; (3) personnel involvement, including duties and qualifications; (4) evidence of effectiveness, including measures and outcome data; and (5) transportability, including conditions needed for effective adaptation. The evaluation reports for all the finalist, semifinalist and honorably mentioned programs for the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 are presented. Nine programs were selected as finalists in 1990-91, seven as finalists in the 1991-92 search, and five as semi-finalists in the 1991-92 search. These finalists were selected on the basis of four practice areas: staffing patterns, service delivery, family involvement, and program design. In addition to these awards, honorable mention awards were given in the area of staffing patterns, program design, family involvement, and early childhood network. (AA)

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EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

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Evaluation Study and Case Studies

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EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS

1990-1991
and
1991-1992

Evaluation Study and Case Studies

by

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THE SEARCH FOR EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDY

INTRODUCTION

The *Search for Exemplary Practices in Early Childhood Education* was a two year collaborative effort between the Illinois State Board of Education and two independent evaluators. The search was conducted during the 1990-1991 and 1991-1992 school years. Three main purposes guided this study:

1. By merely conducting the search, the *importance* of providing quality early childhood programming for all young children would be highlighted. Further public awareness and understanding of the nature and scope of early childhood education throughout the state was intended as an outcome of this study.

2. The search would provide a mechanism to give *recognition* to exemplary practices in particular sites throughout Illinois. Those individuals providing quality programs would be acknowledged publicly on a state and local level.

3. The search would provide *models* for other schools or community programs developing and expanding services for young children. As more and more early childhood programs develop, examples of outstanding practices will be useful in the dissemination of information and adaptation of successful programming. One product developed from this search would be this monograph with descriptive information from each of the finalists and semi-finalists to serve as a resource for parents, practitioners, and individuals preparing to work in or develop new early childhood programs.

BACKGROUND

Early Childhood Legislation

Supporting policy for the education of very young children with and without disabilities has been well documented over the years (Allen, 1984; Hanson & Lynch, 1989; Peterson, 1987; Shonkoff & Meisels, 1990). As early as 1935, funding for innovative programs was provided through Title V, using Special Projects of Regional and National Significance (SPRANS) grants (Shonkoff & Meisels, 1990). With the passage of the Medicaid provisions of the Social Security Act of 1965, early medical, health prevention, and intervention programs for poor children were established. Also in 1965, policy enacted through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act established community-based Head Start programs sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity (Bricker, 1989; Peterson, 1987; Zigler & Valentine, 1979). This program was specifically targeted towards disadvantaged populations. In 1972 and later in 1974, two amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act (P.L. 92-424 and P.L. 93-644) impacted the availability of educational services to young children with handicaps by mandating Head Start to make ten percent of its total enrollment in each state open to children with special needs (Allen, 1984). Furthermore, Public Law 94-142 (1975) and its amendment P.L. 99-457 (1986) has mandated educational programs for children with disabilities from the ages three to five. Although many states have provided services for young children since the passage of P.L. 94-142 in 1975, all states are now required to provide services for this age group beginning in the fall of 1991.

Activities in Illinois: Political and Fiscal Atmosphere

Historically, Illinois has been one of the leaders in providing early childhood education for young children across a myriad of administrative structures. First, Head Start programs have existed in Illinois since 1965. The goal of this program is to provide a comprehensive child development program for preschool-aged children across four major components: education, health, social service, and parent involvement (Illinois State Board of Education, 1990). As previously mentioned, the funds for this program were for low-income populations with the main purpose to provide children with a "head start" on success prior to entering more formal schooling (Bricker, 1989; Peterson, 1987).

Since 1975, the state of Illinois has mandated services for young children ages three to five who have special needs (Illinois State Board of Education, 1979; McCollum, 1987). Federal funds are provided to each state through Section 619 or Part B of P.L. 94-142 and most recently P.L. 99-457. Therefore, each local educational agency is responsible for providing a comprehensive educational program for three-, four-, and five-year-olds with disabilities and their families.

As part of the Education Reform Act of 1985, the state of Illinois through its Department of Education, known as the Illinois State Board of Education

(ISBE), has developed legislation to support public education for an additional group of young children who may be at-risk for later academic failure (Illinois State Board of Education, 1990). Eligibility requirements for these prekindergarten programs include family income at the poverty level, English not being the primary language in the home, parents who are still in their teens or have not completed high school, and low birth weight or prematurity factors which may have resulted in developmental or neurological impairment but not a physical disability. Over the past years, the state has continued to increase its financial support for these prekindergarten at-risk programs. For example, the FY 1986 Illinois budget allocated approximately $12.1 million to serve 5,394 children. In FY 1991, $63 million served an estimated 25,000 children. The growth of funds and children served shows Illinois' strong commitment to the education of young children.

Community child care and preschool programs have expanded as well. Throughout the state and nation, communities have provided a proliferation of programs fostering the healthy development of young children, especially needed due to the changing nature of families and the work force. Not surprisingly, early childhood programs are expanding rapidly, often without clear standards or indicators of program quality. Further, many programs have developed in semi-isolation as single classes in school districts or community settings. Few opportunities existed for program developers to profit from the experiences of others. This trend of supported growth without documentation of success or effectiveness, while understandable, does not facilitate the development of quality standards for programs in early childhood education (Maude, 1989). A strong need existed to identify effective practices in early childhood education throughout the state, to describe and investigate those practices, and to publicize them, making descriptions available to others wishing to develop programs.

COMPONENTS OF THE STUDY

Evaluation Approach

The phrase "search for *exemplary practices* in *early childhood education*" contains three concepts that raise particular issues for evaluators and evaluands and which have important implications for the design, implementation, and impact of the evaluation. *Please note: The evaluation process has previously been described in a published article by DeStefano, Maude, Crews, & Mabry. (1992) in* ***Early Education and Development****, 3(2).*

Exemplary. The choice of the term *exemplary* over alternatives such as *best* or *effective* was intentional and carefully considered. As defined in Webster's New World Dictionary, an exemplary practice is one that serves "as a model or example" (Guralnick, 1987). Because of the intent of the evaluation to produce a set of implemented practices that could serve as a model to others, selection criteria that characterized exemplars were chosen rather than content-specific criteria or standards related to early childhood education.

In the design phase of the evaluation, there was considerable pressure to develop and systematically apply a set of standards or indicators of exemplary practice based in literature and research. However, there was no clear consensus among practicing professionals as to what these indicators should be. Tremendous variations in what was deemed exemplary stemmed from personal and professional philosophy and the type of students served by the early childhood programs. Second, tremendous variation in early childhood programming existed throughout the state, partly as a result of geographic and socioeconomic factors. Illinois is a state with a few large population centers (Chicago, Peoria, Rockford, Decatur) and extensive medical and social services located in a small area (Chicago, Peoria). Large sections of southern and western Illinois are predominantly rural with few population centers over 15,000 and limited specialized services. In these areas, consolidated school districts serve county-wide or multi-county areas. These discrepancies worked against the use of a single set of criteria or standards to identify exemplary practice. Finally, given the fact that the field of early childhood, especially early childhood special education, is rapidly expanding and changing in Illinois and across the nation (McCollum & Maude, in press; McCollum & McCartan, 1987), any definition of exemplary practice may be somewhat time-limited, needing to be reconsidered periodically to account for progress made and to reflect future goals.

Because this evaluation would need to be sensitive to the real ambiguity of exemplary in this context, the investigators decided to use a qualitative, connoisseurship model of evaluation (Eisner, 1975). Teams of identified experts in early childhood, chosen for disciplinary and geographic representation, were employed extensively throughout the evaluation. Drawing upon their considerable knowledge in the field of early childhood, along with their insight into its special context and history in Illinois, these "experts" provided valuable input in identifying exemplary practices.

Along with the decision to use expert review as the primary means of evaluation, the dimensions by which practices were evaluated were chosen to provide evidence that these practices would be viable in other areas within the State. The dimensions were

a) *program description* (e.g., philosophy, program goals, setting, and overall population served): To understand the broad context of the program in which the practice was operating;

b) *description of the practice* (e.g., services provided and activities conducted, rationale, justification for being judged exemplary, costs for the practice and the total costs of the early childhood program): To perceive the practice as distinct from the context of the program and to estimate the costs involved;

c) *personnel involvement* (e.g., titles, roles, duties, and training of key personnel involved in implementing this practice): To describe the nature and extent of personnel requirements;

d) *evidence of effectiveness* (e.g., measures and outcome data indicating the effectiveness of this nominated practice): To document the impact of the practice; and

e) *transportability* (e.g., how well this practice might work in other areas of the state or the conditions necessary for the practice to be adapted): To ascertain how replicable the practice might be.

Practice vs. program. The approach to identify exemplary *practices* rather than comprehensive models was chosen because 1) it is often easier to replicate a particular practice rather than a total model (DeStefano, 1990) and 2) programs may have outstanding practices in one or several areas, yet are still developing as a total model. The search designated seven specific practice areas and one undesignated category. A comprehensive list of practice areas was produced through a review of relevant literature and research and through analysis of practice areas explicitly cited in state and federal policy. Using a consensus validation technique in which a panel of experts were asked to respond to the relevance and importance of each area, the original list was reduced to the seven practice areas used in this evaluation study. A general definition was developed for each area. (See Table 1).

Early childhood education. The search was open to all types of early childhood education programs, including home- and center-based, general and special education, and public as well as private. The idea was to "cast a broad net" looking for exemplary practices that would have broad applicability to a wide variety of early childhood programs within commonalities among the types of early childhood programs.

Evaluation Process

As stated, a connoisseurship evaluation model was chosen as the evaluation approach due to the varied nature of early childhood programming, the impact of context on the exemplary nature of practice, and the multitude of practice areas under consideration. Teams of early childhood professionals were actively involved across all evaluation phases. In fact, those applications and sites designated as finalists underwent a paper or site review by no fewer than eight parents and/or early childhood professionals during the evaluation process.

A comprehensive evaluation plan was designed by the authors at the request of the Preschool Grant Coordinator at ISBE. This study included five major phases:

Phase 1 - Peer nomination of reviewers and design and review of instruments;
Phase 2 - Application;
Phase 3 - Panel review of the applications and selection of semifinalists;
Phase 4 - Site review of semifinalists; and
Phase 5 - Final panel review and selection of finalists.

Phase 1: Peer nomination of reviewers and instrument design. In August of 1990, ISBE issued a memo to all early childhood professionals in the state, requesting nominations of individuals viewed as "experts" in the field of early education. Over 200 responses identified individuals in early childhood education and early childhood special education: administrators, personnel trainers at institutes of higher education, parents, service delivery practitioners, and supervisors. These nominees were associated with public, private, and community agencies throughout the state. This pool of professionals and parents was tapped for participation throughout all five phases of the evaluation study.

Several instruments were developed, reviewed, and piloted: the initial application, panel review forms, the site review training packet, and the final review instrument. A group of nominated experts was asked to critique all instruments and to comment upon the proposed design.

Phase 2: Application. The application packet was designed during the summer of 1990. A draft was reviewed by nominated experts and revised based on their input. The application was divided into seven

main sections. First, an overall description of the search was provided including purposes, a general definition of exemplary practice, specification and definition of each of the seven practice areas, evaluation questions, and responsibilities of the finalists. The second section requested demographic information from each applicant such as contact names and addresses, target population, funding source(s), service location, and number of children served. At this point, the applicant was requested to identify the practice area nominated. Individuals or service delivery programs could submit applications in more than one practice area but only one application per practice area per applicant was considered.

Table 1
Practice areas and definitions

1. Administration:	Managerial staff and leadership that supports and guides the early childhood program.
2. Cultural Promotion:	Emphasis and sensitivity to a child's cultural and linguistic variations.
3. Family-centered/ Family Involvement:	Active, individualized participation by parents and family members in their child's education.
4. Integrated Settings/ Alternative Service Delivery Settings:	Settings that integrate children with disabilities and normally developing peers in typical and/ or unique settings.
5. Program Design:	A clearly articulated philosophy, well-defined theoretical orientation about development and learning in young children, and goals and objectives that are designed for the program, children, and families. Strong linkages exist between philosophy, theoretical orientation, and goals and objectives in designing a comprehensive early childhood program.
6. Service Delivery:	Selected strategies and processes are used to support the specific service delivery approach(es) utilized (e.g., assessment, intervention, evaluation, transition, family support, community education, among others).
7. Staffing Patterns and Staff Development:	Qualified professionals providing services in a collaborative, coordinated delivery system.
8. Other	

The remaining five sections of the application asked the applicant to provide information for each of the five evaluative dimensions: a) *program description*; b) *description of the practice*; c) *personnel involvement*; d) *evidence of effectiveness*; and e) *transportability*. Finally, each applicant was asked to provide an authorized signature on the completed application by an administrator or school superintendent, thereby indicating support by the administration as well as informing them of the evaluation process.

In the Fall of 1990 and 1991, nearly 5,000 applications were sent to public and private programs throughout the state to solicit nominations of exemplary practice in the eight categories. Addresses included public and private service providers, administrators, and practitioners providing direct services. (See Table 2). The search in 1990-91 encouraged submissions across all eight practice areas while the search in 1991-92 focused solely on family-centered practices. Table 3 provides the breakdown of programs represented among the applicants on an individual or co-author basis. It was interesting to note that many sites collaborated on submissions across both years. The total number of individual applications received in 1990-91 was 93 while the total number of submissions in 1991-92 was 50. The greatest number of nominations submitted in the 1990-91 search was in program design (N=27) and family involvement (N=21) with the smallest number in administration (N=6), other (N=3), and cultural promotion (N=2). (See Table 4). The applications ranged in length from five to thirty pages. Applicants provided a wide variety of information such as videotapes, evaluation reports, copies of curricula, and parent testimony to describe their practice and to provide illustration of its exemplary nature.

Phase 3: Panel review and selection of the semi-finalists. In November of 1990 and January of 1991, a two-day review session was held in Springfield, Illinois. Thirteen to sixteen parents and professionals from early childhood and early childhood special education reviewed the applications in three-member panels. *It should be noted that parent reviewers were added more extensively during the 1991-1992 search at both the panel and site review phases.* Proposals were rated by individual panel members who assigned points from the following maximum distribution: program description (5 points); description of practice (40 points); personnel involvement (15 points); evidence of effectiveness (20 points); and transportability (20 points) for a total score of 100 points.

Following the individuals' reviews, each three-person panel met to discuss their ratings and to develop a consensus score. Each panel score was then standardized onto a z-score scale to neutralize different

scoring tendencies by panels (i.e., so no applicant would be penalized because its reviewing panel tended to score lower than other panels). Each panel was also asked to make a global recommendation of whether the practice was exemplary or not. These recommendations were used to set a cut-off score for identification of exemplary practices. By applying a cut-off score of z=1.0, nineteen applicants were identified as semi-finalists in 1990-91 and twelve applicants were identified as semi-finalists in 1991-92. All applicants were contacted and thanked for their participation in the project, and the semi-finalists moved into phase four of the evaluation study.

Phase 4: Site review process. A unique aspect of this evaluation study was the inclusion of an on-site review phase. The purpose of the on-site review was not only to confirm and clarify the information presented in the initial application, but to provide additional supporting evidence regarding the exemplary nature of the practice. Acknowledging that each practice and program may have unique aspects and circumstances, no rigid protocol for site review was presented. Instead, teams of two reviewers were called upon to interview, observe, review documents, and present findings in a narrative site visit report. The specific content and nature of data collection activities were specific to each site, determined by the site visitors in collaboration with the program staff.

Table 2
Distribution sources for application materials.

Source	N
Head Start	82
Prekindergarten At Risk	250
Community day care/preschool	1,422
R*TAS mailing list (inservice training for early childhood special education)	2,221
District superintendents	872
Directors of special education	112
TOTAL	**4,959**

Table 3
Number of applications received by source.

Source	1990-91 N	1991-92 N
State funded Pre-Kindergarten at risk	49	23
Early Childhood Special Education	36	14
Head Start	9	3
Other private/community	20	33
TOTAL	**114***	**73***

*The total number on this table exceeds the number of applications received by practice area (1990-91 = 93 and 1991-92 = 50) due to a number of applications submitted jointly by two or more programs.

Table 4
Applicants, semifinalists, and finalists by practice area 1990-1991.

Practice Area	Number of Applicants	Number of Semifinalists	Finalists
Program Design	27	6	2
Family Involvement	21	5	3
Service Delivery	18	2	2
Integrated Settings	8	1	0
Staffing Patterns	8	3	2
Administration	6	0	0
Other	3	2	0
Cultural Promotion	2	0	0
TOTAL	**93**	**19**	**9**

Applicants, semifinalists, and finalists 1991-1992.

Practice Area	Number of Applicants	Number of Semifinalists	Finalists
Family Involvement	50	12	7

A three-step process characterized the site visits. First, in January 1991 and 1992, sixteen to seventeen nominated experts, parents and professionals, were contacted to participate in a one-day site review training. Training for these site reviewers included an orientation to the evaluation, an overview

of basic qualitative evaluation methods, a review of the applications, and instructions on how to set up a site visit and how to write the final report. Each site was visited for one day by a panel of two team members. The panel members were selected to represent different professional backgrounds and experience. Panels were assigned to review programs in geographic regions outside their own. No panel member reviewed a program with which he or she had any personal or professional association.

Site reviewers were responsible for contacting their sites and negotiating an agenda that would provide opportunities for collecting data relevant to the guiding questions. Typical activities might include interviews with the program administrator, teachers, selected staff members, and consumers; observation of the practice; discussion with parents; and review of documents.

Within five days of the completion of the site review, the panel was asked to submit a written site report. Four questions guided the site visit and the final report:

1. To what extent did the site visit confirm information presented in the initial application? What clarifications were made?

2. What additional information can now be provided to support or refute the exemplary nature of this practice?

3. What can be cited as evidence that this practice is effective? In your best judgement, how will this practice work in other areas? What factors are necessary to insure its success? What are the barriers to implementation of this practice?

4. What are your overall impressions of the practice?

These reports were submitted in late February and a follow-up debriefing with each reviewer was conducted by phone prior to the final phase.

Phase 5: Final panel review and selection. Another panel of reviewers was convened in early March to review all application materials, panel ratings, and site visit reports and to select the finalists. A complete listing of all panel and site review participants in the evaluation process can be found in Appendix A.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Nine programs were selected as finalists in the *Search for Exemplary Practices in Early Childhood Education* in 1990-1991. These finalists represented four practice areas: staffing patterns, service delivery, family involvement, and program design. No finalists were selected in the areas of integrated settings, administration, cultural promotion, and the other category. Four honorable mentions were awarded, one each in the practice areas of staffing patterns, program design, family involvement, and other. (See Table 5). Seven family-centered practices were selected as finalists in the 1991-1992 search. (See Table 6).

Table 5
Listing of 1990-1991 finalists and honorable mentions by practice area

FINALISTS

Staffing Patterns

LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE)
Kankakee School District 111

Program Design

Springfield District 186
Harper Community College (Palatine)

Family Involvement

Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center (Schaumburg)
South Metropolitan Association (Flossmoor)
LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE)

Service Delivery

Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center (Schaumburg)
Lake-McHenry Regional Program (Libertyville)

HONORABLE MENTION

Staffing Patterns

Bright Futures (Peoria)

Program Design

Vermilion Association for Special Education (Westville)

Family Involvement

North Suburban Special Education District (Glencoe)

Other: Early Childhood Network

Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood Network

Table 6
Listing of 1991-1992 finalists and semi-finalists
Family Involvement

Auburn Pre-Kindergarten Program
Auburn School District #10, Auburn, Illinois

Early Step Preschool
Savanna CUSD #300, Savanna, IL

C-U Early Project
Washington School, Urbana, IL

Lasting Impressions
Quincy Public Schools, Quincy, Illinois

Bright Futures
Peoria Heights District #325, Peoria, IL

National Lekotek
Evanston, Illinois Center

The Family Resource Center
Hamilton County CUSD #10, McLeansboro, IL

Semi-finalists

Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood
Winnetka, IL

Summer Bridge Program
Crystal Lake, IL

New Parent Program
Macomb, IL

Early Start
Springfield, IL

Ottawa Developmental Special Education Preschool
Ottawa, IL

1990-1991 FINALISTS

Practice Area: *Staffing Patterns*
Agency: *LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE)*
Address: *1301 W. Cossitt, LaGrange, IL 60525*
Contact Person: *Fred Dornback* *Phone:* *(708) 354-5730*
Practice: *Transdisciplinary Service Delivery System in Special Education Early Childhood Programs*

Description of Program

The overall goal of the LADSE early childhood education program, as an extension of the LADSE Mission Statement, is to provide early intervention for children with special needs to ensure that they reach their maximum potential. A goal for all children with special needs includes the development of social interaction and leisure time skills that will enhance the quality of their lives. It is believed that these goals are more likely to be achieved in environments that are as normalized as possible and include many opportunities for interaction with age-appropriate, nonhandicapped peers.

In keeping with this philosophy and these goals, the LADSE early childhood education program serves 225 students three to six years of age, who exhibit one or more moderate to severe delays in cognitive, social, motor, or language areas. There are a variety of programs available to meet children's special needs.

Description of Practice

The transdisciplinary approach is based on the premise that intervention must be provided in a meaningful, natural, and consistent manner to promote functional skills of students in all areas.

Early childhood teachers are in the classroom four days per week, Monday through Thursday. Each classroom shares a speech and language therapist with one other classroom; therefore, the therapist is in each classroom two full days per week. The occupational therapist is shared by four classrooms; therefore, the O.T. is in each classroom one full day per week.

Fridays are a critical component in the implementation of the transdisciplinary approach within our program. During the Friday planning sessions, activities for the following week are co-planned by all service providers in a collaborative manner. It is determined how student goals are to be incorporated within the classroom activities. Activities and lessons are developed around themes which provides for consistency and ease in planning. Daily routines are analyzed and student's abilities are observed and assessed by the team.

It is the role of each team member to teach and train the other members of the team how to incorporate the goals for a student within classroom activities throughout the day. The speech-language therapist teaches the teacher, the aide, and the occupational/ physical therapist language techniques that will enhance a child's learning and language skills in the natural environment. Similarly, the occupational/ physical therapist needs to empower the other team members to be able to effectively position students, implement feeding programs and further develop fine and gross motor skills when they are not in the classroom. The classroom teacher assists all team members in managing large group instruction and implementing behavior management strategies and instructional techniques.

Personnel Involvement

The transdisciplinary team is composed of several key members and support staff. Key members are those who directly service the child on a weekly basis. These team members include the classroom teacher, speech/ language specialist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and classroom aide(s). Support staff include the teacher consultant, speech/ language consultant, psychologist, social worker, early childhood coordinator, nurse and school principal. Other members who may interact with the team include kindergarten teachers, preschool teachers, doctors, and private therapists.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Evaluation of transdisciplinary teaming occurs through a variety of ways. IEP goals and student progress are obvious measures of the effectiveness of this approach. IEPs have been compared from before this approach was implemented to now. These comparisons have indicated that the number of objectives per student has decreased due to the collaboration of team members and lack of duplication of goals. Although the total number of objectives has decreased, an overall increase in appropriate, functional objectives has been documented.

Teams are requested to complete a "Transdisciplinary Self-Assessment" annually to determine their needs and to develop team goals for the following year.

Supervisors provide consultation throughout the year in those identified areas. Through this process, each team is assisted in attaining the goals they have set for themselves. Parents have also reported that they have been pleased with the service delivery model as reported to supervisors at the time of annual reviews. The annual reviews over the last three years have demonstrated a significant decrease in parental concern regarding the number of "therapy minutes" as designated on the IEP. Finally, since this approach has been implemented at LADSE, we have seen a decrease in turnover, both in teachers and therapists.

Transportability

The transdisciplinary model which has been successfully implemented at LADSE in the Early Childhood program can be readily replicated in other districts. It is imperative that administrative support be provided to make planning time available to staff. To replicate this program, the following recommendations need to be considered:

1. One half-day per week, or three hours per week, as schedules permit, should be allotted per team initially for planning and goal sharing.

2. A sufficient number of therapists need to be employed to provide for the needs of the students in the program.

3. Administrators must accept that change will not occur overnight. They must exhibit creative, patient, understanding and helpful attitudes.

4. Adequate inservice training must be provided. Most staff members have not been trained in a transdisciplinary approach and will require a great deal of support, training, confidence building and positive feedback from their supervisor.

5. Teams will need to assess themselves in order to determine the areas in which they may require further consultation.

6. Encourage all the professionals on the staff to provide inservice training for other staff members who are not of their discipline.

7. Plan monthly brainstorming meetings to discuss staff concerns as necessary.

8. Above all, we encourage any program to take the proper amount of time to plan for the implementation of any new approach requiring a change in current practice and attitude.

9. Finally, it is critical to the success of the program that awareness be made of the potential barriers and problems that may arise with the implementation of this approach.

Practice Area: *Staffing Patterns*
Agency: *Kankakee School District 111*
Address: *240 Warren Ave., Kankakee, IL 60901*
Contact Person: *Mary Jo Johnson* *Phone:* *(815) 933-0720*
Practice: *Site Based Management and Shared Decision Making*

Description of Program

Bright Beginnings is committed to the philosophy that young children learn best through playful interaction in an environment that provides stimulating, challenging materials and activities. Teachers are viewed as facilitators who prepare the environment, observe individual progress, and expand children's thinking by asking questions, offering suggestions, and adding more complex ideas and activities.

The formation of a strong home/school partnership is an essential component of effective preschool education. The primary goal of parent education is to teach, model, and validate the challenging process of parenting and family management, thereby promoting a sense of empowerment in families.

Five classrooms serving 150 students are housed in three different types of settings: 1) a K-4 primary center, 2) a three-room school built in 1866, and 3) the District 111 Montessori Center, which also houses early childhood special education.

Description of Practice

For the past several years, District 111 has been in the process of restructuring through site-based management. The major thrust under such a system is to give teachers, staff, and parents, increased input into decisions.

Shared decision making distinguishes among three types of decisions: 1) a consensus decision which is made with full staff participation, such as inservice training activities and curriculum issues; 2) a consultative decision which is made by the administration after it has consulted with staff members, such as allocation of financial resources and location of facilities; and 3) a command decision which is made automatically without any participation, for example, staff evaluation and transportation contracts.

Weekly staff meetings, regular parent meetings, needs assessments, and evaluation of all aspects of our program form the basis and provide the information on which decisions are made. Student, parent, and instructional staff needs receive top priority. The rest of the staff members act as support personnel whose role is to assist the instructional staff in meeting the needs of our primary clients — the students and their parents.

Personnel Involvement

The well-trained, highly professional staff is the heart and soul of this program. Specific job descriptions have been written for all project employees. Five early childhood certified teachers and five instructional aides form the core of the program. They are supported by a full-time family educator, a half-time social worker, and three bus monitors. Additional staff, hired full-time by District 111, also provide direct services to the program: an early childhood screening coordinator, speech/language pathologists, building principals, school nurses, and school psychologists. The Director of Pupil Services and Special Education serves as the project director.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Evaluation is a key component in every program activity. All staff members evaluate the program in addition to measures of student success reflected in academic achievement, school behavior, attendance, and parent participation. Parents evaluate each activity and complete a survey regarding their experience with the program in general. Primary teachers and principals are surveyed for their input, and a university consultant spends time visiting each of the classrooms.

It is our belief that all who participate in evaluation need to know that their input is valued and will be considered. The Bright Beginnings staff reviews all evaluation results, and the shared decision-making process forms the basis for addressing all concerns.

Transportability

Because this practice is based on a process rather than resources, it can be effective in any type of setting. A key component is administrative support. Since shared decision making is a priority within District 111, there has been a great deal of interest in watching the way the process has been used in this project. However, because of the somewhat self-contained nature of this project, the program could still be implemented in a district which does not utilize site-based management.

Practice Area: *Program Design*
Agency: *Springfield District #186*
Address: *1200 Pope St., Springfield, IL 62703*
Contact Person: *Dr. Harriett Arkley* *Phone:* *(217) 525-3284*
Practice: *Early Start Design*

Description of Program

Early Start is a half-day, school-based program which promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of 365 three- and four-year-old children. Children served are those predicted through a screening process to have difficulty in social, cognitive, and/or physical tasks.

Early Start is designed to foster growth that is developmentally appropriate. Children are provided experiences necessary to develop the skills which make learning to read, write, compute and think critically and creatively easier and natural. In play, children learn through experience and exploration. Promoting a healthy self-esteem and encouraging children to believe themselves to be valuable and capable is a critical focus of the program.

Understanding that parents are the primary influence in children's development, Early Start offers opportunities to parents to share in the school experience and to learn about effective parenting.

Description of Practice

The school-based program and the parent involvement program are the essential components of the program design.

School-Based Program

The use of learning centers is key to the Early Start program design. These centers reflect the basic philosophy and enhance the young child's learning process.

Learning centers

- Encourage discovery, exploration and active participation;
- Allow teaching of small groups and individual children;
- Provide successful experiences that are developmentally appropriate for each child;
- Build responsibility in children for learning and care of materials;
- Provide a positive atmosphere for interactions, verbalization, and social development;
- Develop independence, decision making and self-direction.

Units and themes are the vehicles by which the goals and objectives of the philosophy are realized. They are chosen to meet the specific needs and interests of the children. Units and themes are integrated into all curriculum areas and within learning centers.

Early Start believes that the teacher, the classroom, and all activities are obligated to satisfy children's natural need to acquire knowledge about their physical and social worlds through playful interaction with objects, space and people.

Parent Education Program

The parent education component of Early Start recognizes parents as children's first and most influential teachers. Parents seek and need support and information to enhance their parenting skills. Parents are viewed as partners and are offered many opportunities to work with teachers in a joint effort to guarantee the greatest level of success possible for their children. Opportunities include home visits, Parent/Child Days, a Toy Library, classes and workshops.

Personnel Involvement

Project Director. Plans and directs screening/placement program; organizes and implements parent program; develops and coordinates library; evaluates and supervises staff; conducts administrative functions; supervises and helps prepare budget; plans and conducts inservice; and works with community agencies.

Head Teacher. Organizes, coordinates, and assists with development and implementation of curriculum; coordinates field trips; helps develop and organize activities for student body; supervises maintenance of student assessment records; assists in inservice; and assumes classroom responsibilities on .5 basis.

Classroom Teachers. Implement the curriculum; direct activities for aides and helpers; work with children; maintain records; assist in implementing parent education component; conduct home visits; and screen and assist in evaluation of potential students.

Teacher Aides. Work with children under direction of teacher; assist in initial and ongoing screening; work with parents; and assist in home visits.

Helpers/Family-School Facilitators. Assist with instruction under supervision of teacher; contact parents regularly to facilitate home-school relationships; and assist with preparation of materials and classroom.

Each classroom has a teacher, an aide and a helper/facilitator.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Early Start has been evaluated in two significant, comprehensive ways:

1. The accreditation procedure of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of N.A.E.Y.C., found Early Start's program design effective.

2. In the annual evaluation by ISBE, Early Start has been found exemplary from its beginning. In the 1990 review, the evaluator declared that "The philosophy of the Early Start Program is indubitably developmentally appropriate."

Internal evaluation reveals the following:

1. Post-screening of Early Start children annually shows that growth is substantial in five skill areas: gross motor, fine motor, visual discrimination, language and memory.

2. ISBE's longitudinal study shows the majority of Early Start's "graduates" are doing well in elementary school both academically and social-emotionally.

3. Annual feed-back from Early Start parents indicates growth in parenting skills and understanding as well as enormous satisfaction in their children's experiences.

Transportability

The program model for Early Start could be implemented anywhere in the state of Illinois. The following conditions are necessary for this practice to be adapted:

1. Administrators who value early childhood education and accept a philosophy supportive of developmentally appropriate practices.

2. Administrators willing to find and adapt space appropriate for three- and four-year olds.

3. Project leadership with the administrative skills necessary to create and supervise a new program.

4. Classroom teachers trained and experienced in early childhood education.

5. Staff commitment to working with parents as true partners and recognizing them as the first and most influential teachers of their children.

6. Funding to purchase the equipment and materials necessary for a classroom designed around a number of learning centers.

7. Funding to support the optimal child-teacher ratio and to pay wages so as to severely limit staff turnover.

8. Funding to support continual, high-quality staff development.

Practice Area: ***Program Design***
Agency: ***Harper Community College***
Address: ***1200 W. Algonquin Road, Palatine, IL 60067***
Contact Person: ***Jane Ann Thomas*** ***Phone:*** ***(708) 397-3000***
Practice: ***Curriculum***

Description of Program:

Philosophy. The curriculum is based on the philosophy that young children learn through active exploration in an environment which is rich in materials and opportunities to converse, socialize, work, play, and negotiate with others. The classrooms are planned to encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem solving in an atmosphere of warmth, affection and respect for each child.

Population Served. Main campus: licensed for 40 children, serves approximately 160 children weekly. Northeast Center: licensed for 20 children, serves 35 weekly. Mixed age grouping: children from three to five years old in all rooms.

Main Campus Preschool. Serves children of families from the entire Harper district.

Main Campus Child Care Room. Serves children of Harper students, faculty, and staff.

Northeast Center. Serves both children from the community and those of students, faculty, and staff.

Children in the centers represent various ethnic and economic backgrounds found in the community (primarily white, some black, Asian, Hispanic), as well as different socioeconomic levels (primarily middle-class, some receive aid). Children with special needs are accepted.

Service Location. The main campus center consists of two classrooms, a center island, and an observation room, and is located on the Harper College Campus (Building I, section 123), 1200 West Algonquin Road, Palatine.

The classroom at the Northeast Center is located at 1375 South Wolf Road in Prospect Heights.

Description of Practice

An emerging curriculum based on the program's philosophy evolves as teachers and student teachers plan together. The program objectives and the High Scope Key Experiences for Cognitive Development provide the framework for the development of the emerging curriculum. As the year progresses, patterns become evident within each group, providing criteria and a rationale for the selection of appropriate themes and projects for that group. This depends upon the individual needs, interests, and developmental levels of children in each classroom, and also upon the dynamics of the group as a whole.

Each of the classrooms contain clearly defined interest centers including art, language arts, manipulatives, math, science, dramatic play, blocks, and computers. Teacher-made workjobs are placed in several centers. Natural materials (sand, wood and water) are available daily. Art is creative and open-ended.

Children may work individually or collaboratively and may choose to participate in the theme or project or not. Children are actively involved in experiences which include foundations of math, science, social studies, creative art, language arts, music, movement and dramatic play. All interrelated aspects of the child's growth and development are considered—intellectual, social, emotional, physical and creative.

Personnel Involvement

Coordinator: Supervises and evaluates the staff and all aspects of the center operations.

Lead Teacher: Plans, implements, and evaluates program for children in the preschool. Two lead teachers are employed on the main campus preschool, while one lead teacher is employed at the Northeast Center.

Teacher Assistants: Three teacher assistants are employed on the main campus, while one teacher assistant is employed at the Northeast Center.

Office Manager: Manages all office-related functions and substitutes in classrooms as needed.

Coordinator: A second coordinator is responsible for the academic program.

Evidence of Effectiveness

1. The program is evaluated once each semester through the use of a parent survey (90% or more positive responses).

2. The center is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. That process includes evaluation through the use of a parent questionnaire, evaluation by the coordinator, and self-evaluation by each teacher (90% or more positive responses).

3. The performance of each staff member is evaluated annually by the coordinator. (Most achieve excellent ratings; goals are set by all staff in cooperation with the coordinator.)

4. Ongoing assessment using the program goals and goals for individual children occurs at weekly and monthly staff meetings.

Transportability

This program would appear different in different areas of the state due to the environment which exists locally for children to explore. The environment dictates the things, events, places, and people that are available, and those that are most meaningful for children. In addition, the following criteria are necessary:

1. Commitment of the administration and staff.

2. Skillful staff who are educated in child development theory and trained in developmentally appropriate practice.

3. Staff who are well-paid, with adequate benefits, ensuring consistency through the years. This allows the building of cumulative years of professional development, as well as consistent teachers for the children.

4. Budget which allows for appropriate materials.

5. Educated parents who understand the importance of an active- and play-based curriculum.

6. Learning environment for children which is interesting and relates to things and events in their daily lives; contains concrete objects to explore; provides opportunities to socialize, work together, problem solve, make decisions, converse and negotiate; provides flexible routines; and provides an organized room arrangement.

Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***Township High School District #214, Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center (ECDEC)***
Address: ***524 E. Schaumburg Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194***
Contact Person: ***Sandra Taenzer*** *Phone:* ***(708) 885-6726***
Practice: ***Family-Centered Intervention***

Program Description

The Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center (ECDEC) is funded by an ISBE Grant for children ages three and four years old who are identified as demonstrating "at risk" characteristics in the following areas: socialization, peer interaction, behavior, separation anxiety, language development, experiential, attending, organization, limited English proficient, and fine or gross motor. The ECDEC Program serves children in Palatine, Schaumburg, and Wheeling Townships and is a cooperative effort of seven school districts. (Districts 15, 21, 23, 25, 26, 54 and 57). A total of 400-450 children are served during the school year. Screening for the program is a shared responsibility conducted through the cooperation of special education/early childhood and ECDEC personnel utilizing a natural play environment.

Description of Practice

Family-centered intervention services follow logically from the family's assessment which is completed by the social worker. The assessment, in addition to the information obtained at screening, the social developmental history, and child's Individualized Assessment Profile are used to develop a student/family plan which includes time-projected goals. The ECDEC teams meet on a weekly basis to do family planning and evaluation. Extremely troubled or chaotic families are bridged to community resources, as long-term extensive psychotherapy is not an appropriate function of the ECDEC Program. The social workers, nurse, and psychologist are available to each classroom team or home-based teacher to develop coordinated programs between home and school. Communication between the ECDEC team and the family is integral to facilitation of each Student Progress Plan.

Other service delivery activities include parent orientation activities, parent participation in the classroom, the extension of classroom goals into the home, community activities, parent education groups, workshops and seminars, parent support groups, individual family home visits, consultation with day care and nursery schools, parent resource centers, a family life newsletter, a parent advisory committee, parent recognition honoring parent participation and volunteer efforts at the end of each school year, and transitioning activities from ECDEC to regular nursery school or kindergarten.

Personnel Involvement

All members of the ECDEC Staff are considered Parent/Child Facilitators. Nine teachers are committed to implementing developmentally appropriate practices while facilitating development of the overall family unit. Three social workers provide assessment, counseling, training, support groups, as well as classroom consultation. The nurse provides health services, as well as nutrition workshops, a family life newsletter and individualized family assistance. The psychologist consults with nursery schools and families on an individual basis, provides technical assistance in the class and home, provides evaluation and feedback, and serves as liaison with special education personnel. The program director provides technical assistance, administration, team building, family and individual intervention strategies and direct services to families.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The initial measure of family-centered program effectiveness has been gleaned from two consumer rating instruments completed by parents. During the recent NAEYC accreditation of ECDEC, the Parent Questionnaire prepared by the NAEYC, as well as an ECDEC Parent Opinionnaire (in English, Spanish and Korean) was sent to families with children in the program. The study of summative data on program effectiveness has been an area of continuous research conducted at several levels including 1) Individual Assessment Profile, 2) ISBE Follow-up Format Studies, and 3) a longitudinal evaluation conducted by the University of Chicago. The outcome variables of all data collections consistently support the theory of early intervention and family involvement as a significant force in "normalizing" previously at-risk children.

Transportability

The ECDEC family-centered intervention effort has a philosophy of multifaceted investment in families. The program has developed extensive community linkages over the three-township area. The types of community linkages involved are readily duplicated throughout the state of Illinois. Over the past four years, the Illinois State Board of Education, Early Childhood Unit has frequently directed other school districts in Illinois who wished to observe a pre-kindergarten program to contact ECDEC. ECDEC has had frequent visitors who observe all portions of the program, particularly the family-centered intervention activities and the play-based screening process. A video overview details all aspects of the program and is readily shared with the other districts. The ECDEC staff provide workshops about the pre-kindergarten program each year. All pre-kindergarten staff committed to parental involvement can adapt and utilize this approach. The ECDEC staff eagerly and enthusiastically share their belief in family intervention and are willing to model or provide other assistance to programs throughout Illinois.

Practice Area:	***Family Involvement***
Agency:	***South Metropolitan Association (SMA)***
Address:	***800 Governor's Highway, Box 460, Flossmoor, IL 60422***
Contact Person:	***Karen Sullivan*** ***Phone:*** ***(708) 957-7100, Ext. 260***
Practice:	***Planning for an Individualized Family-Centered Program***

Description of Program

Children with special needs have a fundamental right to develop to their fullest potential. The South Metropolitan Association (SMA) Early Childhood Program is supportive of and responsive to the abilities and environments of young children and their families. The framework of the Program is determined by the unique strengths, needs and growth sequences of the child and family.

Additionally, the population served by the SMA Early Childhood Program is one that many persons would consider severely to profoundly disabled. The cultural and financial representation of the 135 children and their families currently involved in the Program is very diverse. This number does not include the day care and prekindergarten enrollments.

The SMA Early Childhood Program is located in school buildings at four sites. The locations are geographically chosen to best serve the 55 school districts within the region. Under a recently awarded Early CHOICES grant, the SMA Early Childhood Program is developing working relationships with day care and prekindergarten programs located in the buildings that house the SMA Program. The buildings are selected for their accessibility and meet all applicable federal, state and local guidelines/regulations. Family involvement activities and events may occur in the home, in the school, or in community facilities.

Description of Practice

The planning process to be described guarantees (1) full parent participation and (2) full responsiveness of the family centered program to families. The planning process is a partnership between family members and the SMA Early Childhood Program staff. This strong partnership serves as the means to strengthen, enable and empower families.

The family centered program encompasses a variety of components: family assessments, formal and informal parent education, family reporting, individualized family plans, parent-to-parent systems, parent groups, intergenerational programs, community access systems, and intra- and interagency collaboration. The Early Childhood Program cooperates with the family programming provided in the SMA Parent/Infant Program, SMA Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), and the Regional Technical Assistance System (R*TAS), Region 6. This cooperative approach provides a wider array of options for parents.

The following options are available to the parents and family members. They are organized according to the readiness levels of involvement: i.e., attendance, observation, assistance, participation, planning, and leadership, as outlined by Project RHISE/Outreach. According to this philosophy, parents enter the program with differing needs and interests. Some parents will be ready to be involved at the planning level, while others may be ready for the attendance level, etc. The goal for each parent is facilitating more involvement with the realization that every parent will not or cannot be involved to the same degree. Parents should be viewed as being successful at whatever level they are functioning.

The options of the family centered program are shared with the family as part of an orientation process upon entry into the Early Childhood Program and at the beginning of any subsequent year of enrollment. The parents choose activities in which to participate, and they are supported by staff with their choices. The options chosen are written up as a family plan and integrated with the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Family Needs Inventory is also completed when appropriate. This instrument explores and defines the primary family concerns. The Family Needs Inventory is a match with the Parent Programming Bank of Objectives. The bank of objectives is a computerized bank of locally developed objectives to meet the individualized and unique needs of families.

Personnel Involvement

The key personnel in the planning process are the parents of enrolled children. These parents are generally those who have demonstrated leadership. The Parents for Early Intervention are asked to send at least three representatives to serve on the Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee. One early childhood social worker and another early childhood staff member serve on the Committee. During 1990-91 one of the

prekindergarten teachers will be asked to join the Committee.

The personnel expediting the various components of the family centered program are the parents of enrolled children and credentialed early childhood staff. For example, the officers of Parents for Early Intervention (PEI) are family members of enrolled children. Staff members support their activities/events and provide representation at the PEI Executive Board meetings. Another example is that of the early childhood educator expediting a classroom observation with the parent. Another example is the supervisor who shares the information on parent/child rights within the parent education component.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The evidence of effectiveness of the family centered program is ongoing and reviewed for analysis at least annually by the Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee. This committee consists of three parent representatives, two staff members, and an early childhood administrator. The family centered program is also a component of the external three-year evaluation plan.

The effectiveness information for Committee review is gathered from informal communications that are recorded on the communication/telephone logs, focused interview reports, and the instruments listed below. Confidentiality is a critical factor and is recognized as such. Additionally, multiple tools are utilized in the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information from parents and other family members.

Transportability

A well-planned, well-designed family centered plan can be transported to any part of the state. The planning process must include the three stages: development, implementation, and evaluation/continuation and should be in writing. This process is effective because it happens locally and includes the family members, early childhood staff and administration personnel. A good planning process and some sample documents are required to assist a local program in initiating their own family centerd programming. The development must happen locally if the families are to buy in and if it is to endure. The major condition necessary for the implementation of the planning process is the philosophical support for parent participation in all phases of the planning process. There must be a commitment of all the involved early childhood personnel that parents should be offered choices regarding their participation.

Practice Area: *Family Involvement*
Agency: *LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE)*
Address: *1301 W. Cossitt, LaGrange, IL 60525*
Contact Person: *Fred Dornback* *Phone:* *(708) 354-5730*
Practice: *Family Centered Intervention*

Description of Program

The general philosophy guiding the LADSE program for early childhood education maintains that early intervention for children with special needs provides them with the opportunity to reach their maximum potential in later academic and social endeavors. LADSE is a special education cooperative composed of 16 public school districts in western Cook and eastern DuPage counties. These districts comprise elementary, junior high and senior high schools located in suburban neighborhoods. Early childhood classrooms are presently located in ten elementary schools, representing 13 different school districts throughout the LADSE geographical area. Approximately 200 children attend a half-day, Monday through Thursday program.

Description of Practice

One of the major goals of the early childhood education program is to support parents in the role of primary caretaker of their child. Services provided to families enhance the development of the child within the family routine by supporting teaching in an incidental manner. This approach recognizes that each child is a part of a family system and that services must support that system. Communication with parents must be ongoing. The form of this communication may vary and includes home visits, classroom visits, telephone calls, written communication, videotapes, and newsletters.

Additional assistance is provided to parents through various workshops and support groups. Although there is often a structured format that is used in group meetings, the individual needs of the group prompt content modifications. Parent desire for information and education is also addressed through class group meetings and through assistance from individual staff members such as the school psychologist, teacher consultant, or school social workers.

Personnel Involvement

Early Childhood Special Education Teachers and Speech/Language Therapists: Responsible for directly involving parents in the development of their child's Individualized Education Program, including parents in the implementation of the plan, when appropriate, and providing them with updated information.

Teacher Consultants/Supervisors: Supervises all teachers in the program and encourages the development of a parent/teacher working relationship.

School Psychologist: Provides behavior management consultation to parents upon request both in small groups of parents and in individual sessions.

School Social Workers: Coordinate matters between home and school and assist parents by providing information regarding programs, procedures and their parental rights. Social workers are also responsible for teaching parent programs such as Supportive Home Teaching and Responsive Parenting and for assisting parents in the development of behavior management programs in the home. The social workers also provide ongoing support groups which help address the emotional needs of parents in the LADSE early childhood program.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Two objectives of family centerd intervention are to facilitate and improve communication between family and early childhood educators and to increase parenting skills in the home so that both environments are working cooperatively to achieve the child's educational objectives. Measures used to evaluate these objectives are subjective reports from parents and teachers, completed evaluation forms, and a log of the number of parent/educator interactions. Specific measures are as follows:

1. Data obtained from parents in a 1985 survey concerning home visits by the ECE team members provided information as to the desirability of the visit and the effectiveness of this method of communication.

2. Parents completed a questionnaire upon completion of Supportive Home Teaching and Responsive Parenting asking them to identify the skill areas obtained, opinion as to effectiveness of the program and suggestions for change.

3. The actual written comments by both parents and teachers in the home-to-school notebook provided another measure of communication between the two environments.

4. The number of parent contacts by the ECE social workers or psychologist per teacher referral for follow-up on parental concerns either at home or in the classroom.

Transportability

Most of the strategies employed in the LADSE early childhood education family centered intervention could be successfully instituted by other early childhood programs in Illinois. First and foremost, ECE educators and support personnel must strongly believe that parents possess important knowledge about their child, and that their cooperation in the educational process is essential if the child is to experience success in his/her objectives. Secondly, parents and educators must be willing to share their knowledge of the child through clear and concise communications between the home and the classroom. For any family centerd intervention to be successful, there must be a thorough assessment of parent needs and the resources available to meet those needs, realistic goals and objectives delineated, financial support to carry out programming, and committed professionals to facilitate the intervention strategies. The structured parenting programs need the support of the ECE team members, both as facilitators for these groups and as messengers to the parents about the effectiveness and desirability of such training for promoting positive family interactions in the home. School district administrative support in the form of promotion of the programs and provision of facilities for group meetings is desirable.

Practice Area:	***Service Delivery***
Agency:	***Township High School District #214, Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center (ECDEC)***
Address:	***524 E. Schaumburg Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194***
Contact Person:	***Sandra Taenzer*** ***Phone:*** ***(708) 885-6726***
Practice:	***Assessment in a Natural Context***

Program Description

The Early Childhood/Special Education Program began as a local effort with no state or federal funding in 1972 for 80 children. In 1973 it received federal funding as a FIRST CHANCE Project and became a model to be duplicated by other school districts. It was disseminated widely and became nationally recognized. Presently the $1.3 million program is funded with almost all local support and serves 200 children. A major focus of the program continues to be parent involvement and training with nine parent groups and workshops averaging 150 families meeting weekly. A parent room and resource center are located in Schaumburg Township providing a wide range of materials available for each family's use.

Description of Practice

Assessment in a Natural Context developed during the past 18 years is transdisciplinary in focus and developmental in scope. The assessment carried out in a natural play setting, is interactive, involves peers, and includes parents as active participants. In contrast to the traditional examiner-oriented style where the individual child is expected to respond appropriately to an adult's presentation of tasks, this assessment process centers on the child's natural interactions with the environment. The basic notion that creates this style and climate of interactions is a belief that observational information is the essence of diagnosis and demands a heightened responsiveness and awareness by the adult interactor. The child's educational plan, parental involvement, and content presented in the early childhood curriculum follow logically from this assessment model.

Service delivery activities include 1) a cooperative screening effort between early childhood/special education and pre-kindergarten/at-risk programs, 2) child find activities, 3) parent involvement in the screening process, 4) a natural context environment and room arrangement, and 4) an observation and assessment process. If the screening team determines that further evaluation is indicated, the early childhood coordinator meets with the child's parents. The coordinator explains the case study evaluation procedure, reviews the parents' rights as defined by the ISBE, and obtains their consent or refusal for the further in-depth evaluation. All assessment data collected is observational.

Personnel Involvement

The classroom teacher/facilitator observes the child's ability to function in the environment, peer interactions, pre-readiness skills, as well as fine and gross motor abilities. The speech and language pathologist interacts with the child and records spontaneous language samples while observing speech, voice, and fluency characteristics; receptive language; and overall communication abilities. The social worker meets with the parents for orientation and observes parent/child interactions while obtaining the social developmental background. The psychologist observes how the child adapts to the environment by noting the child's exploration and interaction within the play setting noting overall cognitive and affective development. The nurse greets the parent(s) and child and screens each child's vision & hearing. The occupational/physical therapists, vision specialists, and bilingual interpreters are involved as indicated. A hallmark of the team is its transdisciplinary focus and interaction.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Evidence provided by the University of Chicago in its seven-year study of children who may be potentially learning disabled indicated that *Assessment in a Natural Context* significantly differentiated between at-risk preschoolers, preschoolers with handicapping conditions, and the typically developing (normal) Schaumburg Township preschool population. Children found eligible for the Toledo Public School Early Childhood/Special Education program were assessed further to validate the *Assessment in a Natural Context* process. The Toledo Public Schools reported the Schaumburg Model to be 93.4% in agreement with the standardized instruments, based on the results of the secondary evaluation.

Transportability

Assessment in a Natural Context has been disseminated in many other states as well as portions of Illi-

nois. Over 40 presentations of the assessment model were given between 1974 - 1979. From 1979-81 Sandy Taenzer, early childhood coordinator, and Chuck Hanlon, District 54 psychologist, served as consultants on early childhood assessment to the New Jersey Department of Education and conducted a series of training workshops and on-site demonstrations for New Jersey Child Study Teams, Department of Education staff and six New Jersey College diagnostic teams. Recent presentations in Illinois have included Project LINK in Elgin, CAEYC, Ford-Iroquois Preschool Cooperative, Urbana Public Schools, and Wheeling Public Schools.

The Schaumburg District 54 ECDEC and Special Education programs have frequent professional visitors to observe the assessment process. Visitors are encouraged to utilize any portions of the assessment process that may be compatible with their individual needs or procedures. The assessment process is adaptable to a wide variety of situations.

Practice Area: ***Service Delivery***
Agency: ***Special Education District of Lake County***
Address: ***394 Peterson Road, Libertyville, IL 60048***
Contact Person: ***Kathy Erlenbaugh*** ***Phone:*** ***(708) 367-4300***
Practice: ***Arena Assessment***

Description of Program

The Special Education District of Lake County (SEDLC) is a special education low incidence region which serves 38 school districts in Lake County. (SEDLC) serves as a supplemental resource to local programs and does not supplant nor duplicate services already being provided through local efforts.

The Lake Diagnostic Center (LDC) of (SEDLC) in Libertyville, Illinois has as one of its primary responsibilities the provision of a range of in-depth evaluations for preschool children who are suspected of having a disability which might limit their future performance in school.

It is the belief of the personnel at Lake Diagnostic Center that each preschool child who visits the clinic is entitled to a free and appropriate evaluation of his/her strengths and needs. As a result, different evaluation approaches should be available to allow flexibility in meeting the needs of each child.

Description of Practice

Preschool evaluations are provided through LDC's Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Clinic (IDC). These evaluations are performed through a traditional multidisciplinary approach or a transdisciplinary arena procedure. In the first approach, the child is seen separately by professionals from a range of disciplines. A parent interview is conducted separately by the school psychologist. After all the evaluators have completed their assessments, the team meets to discuss the child's performance. This staff conference allows a total picture of the child's overall functioning to be drawn. Assessment instruments include a range of standardized measures, criterion-referenced measures, parent report, and clinical observation. In addition, every effort is made to visit the child's preschool when appropriate and/or talk to preschool personnel.

The diagnostic personnel feel that this more traditional, multidisciplinary approach results in the best possible picture of the older and higher functioning preschool child's needs. However, with younger preschool children, low functioning youngsters, or individuals whose behavioral issues limit compliance, a system which relies on standardized measures has some shortcomings.

In response to these concerns, the personnel at LDC have developed a transdisciplinary arena assessment approach. In this approach, the child is assessed by the same group of professionals. However, one member of the diagnostic team serves as the primary facilitator while other team members and the parents observe the proceedings at a slight distance. This arrangement allows the other team members to record observations and score assessment tools. It also ensures inclusion of the parents as part of the evaluation team. In this way, parents are able to provide relevant information and validate the child's performance. Additionally, parents can administer some items if it seems this will enhance the child's performance. Again, additional input is sought from the child's preschool setting. The tools of an arena assessment consist of a carefully selected array of toys with which the child is allowed to interact fairly freely. The role of the primary evaluator is to facilitate the child's play with these items, rather than to structure the child's responses formally. Through observing the child's play, gathering parents' input and comparing this information with developmental expectations, the team members are able to form a portrait of the child's functional strengths and weaknesses.

Personnel Involvement

The key personnel who implement the IDC are teams consisting of an audiologist, occupational therapist, school psychologist, speech/language pathologist, vision technician and, if needed, a vision consultant. The audiologist evaluates the child's hearing and middle ear functioning, while the vision technician screens visual acuity and color perception. In some cases, due to a child's lower functioning, the vision consultant screens vision skills. The school psychologist is responsible for interviewing the parent and preschool personnel, if appropriate, as well as assessing the child's cognitive ability, preacademic skills, social/emotional status, and adaptive skills. The speech/language pathologist evaluates communication skills, while the occupational therapist evaluates gross and fine motor abilities. Typically, the psychologist or speech/language pathologist serves as the

case manager in facilitating report completion and arranging the Multidisciplinary Conference.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the IDC is evaluated in several ways, including a needs assessment completed annually by member districts, monitoring the number of referrals to the clinic, and an analysis of follow-up data on children evaluated in the clinic. The results of the FY 91 Needs Assessment Report indicated a high level of satisfaction by member districts. It is also significant that the number of referrals to the Lake Diagnostic Center continues to increase, indicating that the Center fulfills an ever growing need in Lake County for preschool diagnostic services. Analysis of follow-up data on the children who were seen in the Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Clinic indicated that of all the children seen in our clinic in the past school year, 86.4 percent were placed in some sort of specialized programming as a result of their evaluations at the IDC.

A final means of evaluating the IDC has been instituted this year. This evaluation consists of a parent questionnaire which is being distributed to each family who attends the clinic. At this time, questionnaire results have not been formally analyzed, although responses are generally positive.

Transportability

Since multidisciplinary evaluation of preschoolers is a mandated service, the adoption of the IDC format entails the tailoring of systems which are already in place, rather than the initiation of new services or expenditure of new funds. The key characteristics of the IDC are the cooperative effort of professionals from diverse developmental areas, time allowed for this cooperation, and the use of different format types depending on the needs of the child involved.

The first step in LDC's development of the arena approach was to attend the Illinois Technical Assistance Project (ITAP) workshop on Infant and Toddler Assessment. After this workshop, IDC staff visited programs which already used some form of arena assessment to find a format which would seem to work well practically and philosophically with the more traditional approach already employed by the IDC. The arena model which seemed most compatible was that which is used by the South Metropolitan Association (SMA). As a result, SMA personnel were invited to SEDLC to provide an inservice on their evaluation approach and to model an actual evaluation. Funding for this inservice was provided by a minigrant from the R*TAS, Region 2. After this inservice, IDC personnel met together to modify SMA's procedures and materials to fit the IDC's needs more exactly. The materials list thus generated was used to determine which items were already on hand at LDC and which needed to be obtained elsewhere. To keep start-up costs as low as possible, a list of needed materials was distributed to all clinic personnel to solicit donations.

1990-1991 HONORABLE MENTIONS

Practice Area:	**Staffing Patterns**
Agency:	**Peoria County, Bright Futures**
Address:	**Sisson Hall Bradley University Peoria, IL 61664**
Contact Person:	**Rhonda Hunt**
Phone:	**(309) 677-2810**
Practice:	**University/school collaboration**

The Bright Futures project is a cooperative program between Bradley University and Peoria Heights, Illini Bluffs, Dunlap, Brimfield, Pleasant Hill, Pleasant Valley, Illinois Valley Central, Norwood and Elmwood school districts. The project provides university grant writing, supervision and consultation to a prekindergarten at-risk program in addition to certification coursework leading to the early childhood certificate.

Practice Area:	**Program Design**
Agency:	**Vermilion Association for Special Education**
Address:	**125 Ellsworth Avenue Westville, IL 61883**
Contact Person:	**Cathy Bolser**
Phone:	**(217) 267-3141**
Practice:	**Extending the use of classroom themes to include real-life materials and experiences**

This practice centers around the development of an area in the classroom which accompanies a chosen theme (such as the farm or transportation). Real-life materials form the basic structure of this area in which children are allowed to explore and experiment with the real world as they perceive it in a natural play environment. Parents and other community members provide materials to be used in this space. Teachers, parents, and classroom visitors encourage and respond to students' ideas, suggest ways to extend their activities, and set up problem-solving situations as students interact with materials and peers in this area.

Practice Area:	**Family Involvement**
Agency:	**North Suburban Special Education District (NSSED)**
Address:	**7 Happ Road, Building C Early Childhood Center Northfield, IL 60093**
Contact Person:	**Susan Canter or Marce Melendy**
Phone:	**(708) 501-2732**
Practice:	**Parent participation and support**

PIP is a parent involvement program which provides a weekly opportunity for participation in school as well as family support and education. Through PIP, collaboration between parents and teachers is increased, and a supportive peer group is established among parents. Every Wednesday morning and afternoon parents are invited to participate in their child's classroom for an hour of teacher-designed and guided parent-child activities. Following the classroom session, parents meet as a group to discuss the classroom experience as well as issues relevant to special-needs families and child development.

Practice Area:	**Other**
Agency:	**Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood**
Address:	**1235 Oak Street Winnetka, IL 60093**
Contact Person:	**Blakely Bundy**
Phone:	**(708) 441-9001**
Practice:	**Early childhood network**

The Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood is committed to the healthy growth and development of young children from birth to age eight. The Alliance acts as an advocate for children, offering organizations and adults in parental, professionals, or volunteer roles the resources and support needed to best meet the developmental needs of children. Its Board of Directors includes parents and professionals representing Winnetka's child care centers, preschools, public, private, and parochial schools, and several community agencies and organizations with an interest in young children. The Alliance provides services for both parents and professionals, which currently include: a quarterly newsletter; a weekly program on cable TV featuring area child development experts; a video library, conveniently housed at a commercial video store, which makes videotapes on child development, parenting, and early childhood education available free of charge; referral services; parenting courses; and networking opportunities for Winnetka's early childhood professionals.

1991-1992 FINALISTS

Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***Auburn School District #10***
Address: ***445 North Fifth Street, Auburn, IL 62615***
Contact Person: ***Jan Oaks*** ***Phone:*** ***(217) 438-6916***
Practice: ***Pre-Kindergarten "At-Risk" Program***

Program Description

Philosophy. It is our desire to adequately address the needs of children identified as "at risk" of academic failure between the ages of 3 and 5 years old and their families, through a public pre-kindergarten program. We feel that early intervention will enable these children to be adequately prepared for entrance into kindergarten.

Our pre-kindergarten staff believes that parents are the first and most important educators of their children—that they indeed make the difference in school success. We feel very strongly that parents must take an active role in the education process. The parents are provided education, information, experiences and resources that will help them to be more effective parents and teachers of their children. In turn, we feel it is the parents' responsibility to take advantage of as many of these opportunities as possible.

Target Population. The number of students that the program is designed to serve is 90. In the current 1991-92 school year we presently have 80 students enrolled. Seventeen of these children were involved in the program the previous year. There are also 17 children who are bused from Divernon and attend one of the three morning sessions. We expect to be at our maximum enrollment by the end of the school year.

The Auburn Pre-K "at risk" program is made up of children from both Auburn and Divernon. Auburn, Illinois is a small rural community of 3600 people with average socio-economic deprivation.

Over 30 percent, of the 610 elementary school students enrolled, are from low-income families. Auburn is a transient community due to the abundance of low-income housing. Divernon, Illinois is also a rural community of 1000 people located 5 miles southeast of Auburn. The enrollment in grades kindergarten through eighth grade is 4 with 18 percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

The professional staff of both districts believe that due to the socioeconomic climate of these communities and the number of identified "at-risk" children, a public pre-kindergarten program for serving the 3- to 5-year-old population who have been identified as "at-risk" of academic failure is essential in meeting the needs of these children and their families.

Description of Practice

The goals we use in developing the parent involvement aspect of our program include the following: a) help all families establish home environments to support learning and positive parenting, b) design effective forms of communication to reach parents, c) recruit and organize parent help and support, d) provide ideas and materials to parents on how to help their child at home, and e) recruit and train parent leaders.

Services and Activities

Services provided and activities held in connection with the family involvement component of our program to support these goals include the following:

- Orientation meeting
- Screening
- Home visits 3 times a year
- Telephone calls—warm and friendly
- Newsletters once a week
- Daily contacts on arrival and pickup
- Toy and book lending library
- Parent resource library
- Bi-annual Parent-Teacher conferences
- Monthly home activity calendars to do at home
- Parent suggestion box
- Monthly parent advisory committee
- Parent volunteers for classroom help
- Parent handbook
- Family fun activities once a month
- Adult literacy programs
- Parent education resource book
- Parent education classes including:
  1. Parents as Reading Partners
  2. Responsive Parenting
  3. Self-Esteem: A Family Affair
  4. Orientation to Parent Classroom Participation
  5. Discipline and Guidance
  6. Single Parenting
  7. Practical Parenting
- Parent bulletin board
- Parent contacts
- Open door policy
- Videotapes of activities
- Weekly parent discussion groups once a week
- Field trips
- Emergency clothing and financial support for families

Personnel Involvement

The staff hired for the Pre-K program have always approached the family involvement component as a team effort. Besides fulfilling their classroom teaching responsibilities, the five teachers work together to plan curriculum, activities and themes as well as participate in additional screening throughout the year, do home visits, coordinate parent-teacher conferences and share in facilitating family intervention.

Complementing the program are three teachers aides, whose responsibilities include assisting children who participate in the breakfast and lunch programs, recording attendance and other clerical duties, and purchasing supplies that are needed for snack time in all classrooms, in addition to being active teachers in the classroom.

We have been fortunate to have enough funding in our state grant to include in our staff a .60 FTE parent-community education facilitator. This person coordinates and facilitates all parent and community involvement. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, teaching parent education classes, community awareness, coordination of all parent involvement activities including classroom visits, field trips, family activities and parent help outside of the classroom.

The parent-community education facilitator works closely with other child-care providers who are concerned with the education, welfare, health, and safety needs of young children. Additional duties of the parent-community education facilitator are to contact community businesses, churches, and organizations to explain the program and to seek assistance in reaching families with "at-risk" children who may be unaware of the services that are offered.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Based on the cooperation and enthusiasm of the parents and children, our program is very successful. But that is not all we use to measure the effectiveness of our family involvement practices. There are almost as many forms of evaluation as there are family involvement services and activities to evaluate.

The Pre-K program overall has a "Pre-K Parent Evaluation Summary" that the parents are asked to complete. Family involvement activities are evaluated individually. Each of the family activity nights is evaluated by both the parents and the staff for organization; enjoyment by the participants; length of time, too short or too long; and appropriateness for the family. Also, increased attendance usually indicates the activity is scheduled at a convenient time, has been adequately promoted and is an activity the family wants to attend. The parent education classes have their effectiveness measured at the end of the series of classes by the parents taking the class and the teacher of the class. Our average attendance at family nights is 130. Several opportunities are provided for the parents to give suggestions or issue complaints or concerns involving both the family involvement component and the overall program. They can use the suggestion box, attend a parent advisory committee meeting, meet the teacher for a conference or make a phone call to the teacher at any time.

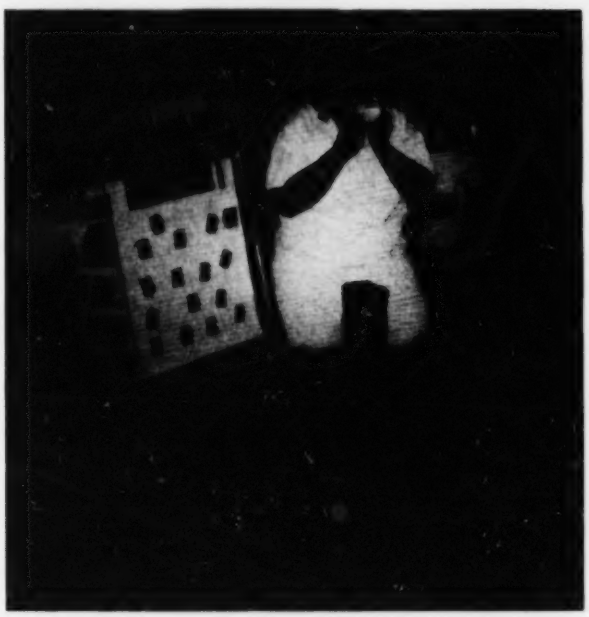
Transportability

The services and activities offered at Auburn Pre-K for the family involvement practice can easily be adapted in other settings by meeting the following conditions.

The budget needs to include funds available for books and materials to be purchased for a Parent Resource Library and for toys and books to be used in the Toy and Book Lending Library. Adequate space is also necessary in order to successfully offer a Parent Resource and Toy and Book Lending Library.

Time is probably the most valuable condition necessary in organizing and fulfilling many of the services and activities. At least a part-time parent facilitator should be written into the budget.

The staff must recognize that flexibility, as well as sensitivity, is necessary to meet the variety of needs that each family has. A willingness to participate in family activities is also a necessary commitment on the part of the staff members.



Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***Savanna CUSD #300***
Address: ***18 Adams Street, Savanna, IL 61074***
Contact Person: ***Charlotte Kreuder*** ***Phone:*** ***(815) 273-7532***
Practice: ***Early Step Preschool***

Description of Program

Philosophy. The Early Step Preschool program is designed to give children successful learning experiences by providing developmentally appropriate activities and encouraging positive social interactions and self-images. The parent component is an integral factor in the program. Every effort is made to get parents involved in their child's education. Parents' key role in the development of a child's attitudes is recognized and valued by involving parents at every level of program delivery.

Population Served. Children ages 3-5 who have been identified as being at risk of school failure, either through their screening scores or family challenge factors, are eligible. Children come from seven rural communities throughout Carroll County. The Savanna School District, located in rural northwestern Illinois, is the administrative agent for this county-wide program with sites in Savanna, Lanark and Chadwick Schools.

Description of Practice

Recognizing that parent individual life circumstances, preferences, and attitudes will determine what level of participation is comfortable for them, the Early Step program offers a variety of types and levels of involvement to parents. Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved in the program at their own level of preference. Information is provided at each level concerning how children view their world and how they learn. Parents are continually reminded of how important their attitudes and interest in education are in shaping their children's attitudes and interests. Parents may serve as classroom volunteers, assist in making classroom materials at home, serve on parent planning committees, and/or attend monthly parent meetings on topics chosen by the parents. They may choose to enroll in a more intensive eight-week parenting course, borrow pertinent literature from their program's parenting library, and/or use the weekly at-home activity suggestions with their own child. Parents may serve as classroom resource persons, sharing a hobby, talent or interest with the class; help organize classroom parties; accompany the class on field trips; provide snacks or other needed materials for the class; make phone calls to other parents regarding program information; contribute to the weekly newsletter; and/or sew or repair classroom items.

Personnel Involvement

Program Director. In addition to supervising classroom activities, the Program Director serves as the parent coordinator, conducting parent interviews at screening; planning and conducting monthly parent meetings; meeting with the parent planning committee; conducting parent surveys; writing a weekly newsletter; and providing written materials for parents including a parent handbook, a parent volunteer guide, and current literature relating to child growth and development.

Classroom Teachers (3). Classroom teachers' duties include making home visits to participating families, measuring and reporting to parents on student progress, contributing to the weekly parent newsletter including suggesting at-home activities to enhance parent-child interactions, and assisting with monthly parent meetings.

Teaching Assistants (3). Teaching assistants participate in home visits and parent conferences and assist with parent meetings.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the family involvement program is assessed through parent surveys. The 1991 survey showed:

100% of parents were generally satisfied with the program.

100% reported their child had a positive attitude towards learning.

97% reported their child's behavior had improved.

94% found the weekly newsletter very useful.

73% of those attending rated the group parent meetings very useful.

82% rated home-school communication very useful.

77% rated the overall program as excellent.

Another indication of effectiveness is the increase in attendance at parent meetings. From an average attendance in the early program years of 6-8 parents, attendance has increased on an average of 93 adults per meeting. The Early Step Program has been cited by the County Board, local newspapers, and ISBE consultant site reviewers as providing valuable services to Carroll County families.

Transportability

This practice is easily transportable to other districts with early childhood programs. Necessary conditions include job descriptions which clearly state each staff member's responsibilities in the family involvement program and flexibility in scheduling staff time. This program allows one day a week for classroom teachers to work on family involvement activities as well as their classroom planning, and also allows flexible hours so that teachers can participate in evening parent meetings and home visits. Teaching assistants are also permitted to use evening hours as part of their work week. Having a full-time staff member, in this case the program director, who is not responsible for daily classroom activities allows adequate time for implementing family involvement.

The program director has presented sessions on the parent component of this program at early childhood conferences and has received communications indicating that other programs have been able to implement ideas and techniques from the Early Step program and have used materials prepared by the director for their local in-service workshops.

Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***Urbana School District #116***
Address: ***Washington School, 1102 N. Broadway, Urbana, IL 61801***
Contact Person: ***Bernie Laumann*** ***Phone:*** ***(217) 384-3616***
Practice: ***Early Childhood Program***

Program Description

Philosophy. The Urbana School District #116 Early Childhood Program staff is committed to providing a quality, individualized learning program for eligible preschool children. The classroom activities focus on a concern for the child's total development including communication, cognitive, physical and emotional development. Children in the classroom grow through play and interactions with each other. Play interactions and environments are designed to foster children's initiative and independent learning. The activities and the environments reflect developmental levels and natural interests of the children.

Children enrolled in Early Childhood education at Washington School have been identified through a screening and assessment process as needing one or more of the following: a) special education services, b) school readiness experience, or c) bilingual instructions.

The Multilingual/Multicultural Early Childhood Program (MECA) is a federally funded Title VII program that operates in conjunction with the other early childhood classrooms at Washington School. The children enrolled in this program are limited English proficient (LEP) and have special linguistic, social, and cognitive development needs. The goals of the MECA program are to meet needs through continued development of the child's home language, development of English language skills, introduction to the social norms in American schools and maintenance of the home culture.

C-U Early Project provides another opportunity for family involvement. C-U is a joint project of the Champaign and Urbana Public Schools funded by the state Model Parent Training Grant. This program offers parent support and education; parent-child playgroups; two drop-in centers, one at Washington School in Urbana and one at Marquette School in Champaign; a parent warm-line, linkages with other family services for parents of children aged birth to five years old; and technical and assistance to local agencies offering parenting programs. Programs are designed to give parents the knowledge and skills they need to enhance their children's development and in this way prepare them for school entry.

Target populations served through the Family Center at Washington School include children 3-5 in need of school readiness experience, children 3-5 in need of special education services, children 3-5 who have limited proficiency in English and all parents of children birth to kindergarten who are eligible for services. Overall the total served is 1,090.

Description of Practice

The goals of the family involvement component within each program are designed to:

- focus on prevention,
- build on the family's strengths,
- treat parents as partners and the primary teacher of their child,
- enhance the capacity of parents to foster the optimal development of their children,
- provide services to help parents deal with natural parental concerns and cope with the stresses encountered in parenting,
- empower parents and strengthen families to seek opportunities which will allow them to achieve their potential,
- respect the integrity of the family unit,
- foster cultural, ethnic and religious sensitivity,
- provide linkages within the community to other systems of services and support,
- build parent self-esteem.

Personnel Involvement

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED
AND PRE-K AT RISK

- Family Coordinators — (2 full time staff persons). The family coordinators link parents and children with resources in the community and school, concentrate efforts to promote regular school attendance, and are responsible for operating the Family Center.

- Family Center Educator — (1 full time staff person). The family center educator assists parents and makes them feel welcome in e family center.

- School Social Worker — (1 full time staff person). One social worker provides support, counseling, and case management for families whose severe dysfunction is preventing the child from experiencing success in the school program. She assesses intervention needs of families referred by classroom teachers or family coordinators.

- Screening/Diagnostic Team Social Worker — (1 full time staff person). This social worker is part of the screening and assessment team. She meets with each family who brings a child to screening. She does the initial intake assessment to provide the staff with family background information. Both social workers have M.S.W. degrees and are certified school social workers.

M.E.C.A. PROGRAM

- Family Coordinators — (6 part-time staff persons). Six family coordinators, representing different linguistic/cultural groups, work with the families in the MECA project. These family coordinators provide the link between home and school. They visit each home twice per month to work with families on activities in the home language that will support the classroom curriculum. Family coordinators are also a resource for providing the classroom teacher with information about children's cultural backgrounds.

C-U EARLY PROJECT

- Program Coordinator — (1 full-time person). The coordinator is responsible for the overall leadership and supervision of C-U Early Project. Team building, marketing, public-community relations, budgeting, and program development organization, evaluation are included in this role. In addition, the project coordinator provides direct parent services.

Evidence of Effectiveness

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED
AND PRE-K AT RISK

The following data were obtained from the 1990-91 school year:

- Family coordinators encouraged each parent to participate in one of the following classroom opportunities: classroom visitation, parent-teacher conferences, and classroom assistance. Fifty percent (50%) of the families participated in classroom activities. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the families participated in parent-teacher conferences.

- Family coordinators provided referrals and/or transportation to community agencies, i.e., Public Health, C.A.S.E., PublicAid, and medical clinics for forty percent (40%) of the families.

- Family coordinators made home visits related to truancy and health for twelve percent (12%) of the families.

- Thirty (30) families participated in the Family Focus Support group.

- Twenty-five (25) families participated in an evening support group for single-parent families from October through April.

- Ten (10) families participated in a six-part series called "Divorce and Your Child."

- Twelve (12) families participated in a entitled "The Juggling Act."

- Ten (10) families participated in "Learning is Fun Together" workshops.

- Ninety-eight percent (98) of families utilized the book and toy lending library.

- A parent support group called the "Lunch Bunch" averaged forty (40) families per week.

- Parent Opinion Survey Results

M.E.C.A. PROJECT

Home visit reports and phone call records indicate that each family is visited twice a month and contacted even more frequently. Aproximately 50%-60% of the parents have attended each Family Meeting. Including the Family Coordinators whose children are enrolled in the MECA classroom, 25% of the parents regularly volunteer in the classroom, either weekly or bi-weekly. One-half of the parents have come into the classroom to help at least once. Parent surveys have indicated that, in general, parents are satisfied with the program, with the family coordinators and the home visits, and with their involvement in the program. This conclusion is supported by information received from family coordinators after talking with families during home visits. Finally, community support for the project is evident in the long waiting list for the MECA classroom. We have space for 32 children in the

MECA program and currently have more than 35 names on our waiting list.

C-U EARLY PROJECT

The C-U Early program served an unduplicated total of 695 families in 251 hours of instruction which included 96 workshops/seminar sessions and 76 parent-child activity sessions. In addition, C-U Early provided 161 days (1288 hours) of drop-in center/toybook lending library availability with 1,125 parent visits and 2,537 resources loaned to parents. The C-U Early warmline responded to 292 calls from parents requesting advice or referral.

Participant evaluation of C-U Early programs indicate that parents are very satisfied with C-U Early services. In particular, parents reported that program staff were supportive and knowledgeable, and that classes were helpful and provided new ideas and strategies for meeting the stresses and challenges of parenthood.

Transportability

To adapt this practice to other settings, a similar overall philosophy concerning family centered programming would be necessary. In other settings the family events, newsletters, workshops, home visits, etc., would have to be offered by personnel who share a common nonjudgmental attitude about the value of all kinds of families. If these practices were done in an atmosphere where families felt uncomfortable being involved, then the support programs would never be successful.

The goals of the Washington School family involvement program outlined in this narrative would also have to be embraced as goals by the entire school staff to promote active parent involvement in the schools.

In summary, the key issues involved in adapting this practice to other settings are: 1) overall program philosophy and goals are family centered; 2) all staff in the building are committed to this philosophy; and 3) staff members collaborate and work together to ensure that families' needs are met.

Practice Area: *Family Involvement*
Agency: *Quincy Public School District #172*
Address: *1444 Main Street, Quincy, IL 62301*
Contact Person: *Peggy Simon* *Phone:* *(217) 228-7129*
Practice: *Lasting Impressions*

Description of Program

The Quincy Public School District parent education/family involvement program is committed to excellence in education and participation for families of young children (expectant parents through parents of children eight years old). Since April 1990, the program has offered diverse families individualized, adaptive, and flexible programming. The program is designed to empower parents with the knowledge and tools to enhance their parenting skills, and their relationship with their child and the school and to ensure the future school success of their child.

The Quincy Public School program, Lasting Impressions, is housed in a K-3 neighborhood school and offers programs to a Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start Center, six K-3 neighborhood schools, special education programs, and several community agencies. The major funding of the program is from the Illinois State Board of Education Model Parent Training grant with network funding from Chapter 1, Special Education and private donations. Linking with volunteer agencies has provided several in-kind services to the program. Collaboration among agencies and school programs has promoted significant growth in the program's services to families.

Description of Practice

Parent/child interaction centers and collaboration are two strategies which have been most successful in the program. This component emphasizes the bonding between school, home, and families, implying the partnership of common goals and common needs. Families choose to attend any neighborhood school for the sessions and participate in parent/child learning centers featuring developmentally appropriate activities. Sessions have been scheduled for birth - 23-month olds, two-years olds, and 3-5-year-olds at each learning center. School personnel (principal, teachers, parents of children attending the school) are present to assist and communicate with families so that they might develop positive feelings toward the school and education. Upon completion of the center's activities, parents are given opportunities to ask questions about particular developmental skills addressed in the activities and to share any other concerns about child growth and development or parenting skills. Take-home packets are provided for parents and for children. Other community agencies serving the needs of families have adapted the ideas of the centers and implemented them in their family programs with assistance from school personnel.

Lasting Impressions offers other components such as parenting classes, a family resource library, home visits, parent presentations, co-sponsoring of a parenting fair, and expectant parent classes. An advisory board representing school and community agencies serves the program.

Personnel Involvement

The key personnel involved in the planning of the parent education/family involvement program include

- Parents of children ages birth - eight years old;
- Administration, including the superintendent of schools and directors of Chapter 1, special education, language arts, mathematics, and district curriculum;
- Accelerated school personnel;
- Board of Education;
- Family Focus.

In the program, the following key personnel have dual roles in planning and implementing:

- Early childhood and special education educators;
- Social workers and psychologists;
- An advisory board composed of parents, school personnel, and representatives of agencies involved with families;
- Chapter 1 school parent mentors;
- Pre-Kindergarten At-Risk and Head Start personnel;
- John Wood Community College;
- Early childhood screening diagnostician;
- Consultants who share their expertise;
- Child care workers;
- Parent education/family involvement staff.

Evidence of Effectiveness

The evidence of effectiveness of the parent/child interactions is ongoing. The organizational framework for measuring effectiveness includes:

The advisory board meets to review the sessions offered and shares the needs of clients. An outside agency, Family Focus, was hired to help plan and to assess the effectiveness of the program. The staff meets regularly to evaluate each set of sessions presented to families. Evaluations obtained from families are provided by ISBE, informal communications, and the staff. Information received from these evaluations concluded that the sessions were very productive, helpful, enjoyable and empowering for families. Many parents shared a new appreciation for opportunities to interact with their children and with school personnel before their children entered school. An increase in referral from community agencies and an increase in families participating show evidence of effectiveness.

The systematic procedure of collecting and analyzing information from parents during the first year played a crucial role in the planning and implementation of the program during this second year. The determination of the program curriculum centered around these evaluations. Since April 1990, the program has grown to serve over 637 parents.

Transportability

The parent/child interactions have been well planned and implemented in many different settings in the community over forty times. Since the staff has implemented numerous sessions, it has found the important stages in sharing these sessions to be the following:

A. Assessing the developmental needs of children to be served,
B. Planning appropriate parent/child interaction sessions to meet these needs,
C. Implementation of the sessions,
D. Evaluation of the sessions,
E. Continuation of the sessions.

The planning and implementation process in other settings should be easier because of the research and previous planning of the Quincy Family Involvement/ Parent Education staff. Sample documents, handouts, and take-home packets can be provided by the Quincy program. Other programs can use them to develop appropriate plans. It will be necessary for the local participants to assess needs and involve parents and community agencies to gain the necessary support from families, schools, and agencies in their community.

Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***Peoria Heights District #325***
Address: ***Sisson Hall, Bradley University, Peoria, IL 61625***
Contact Person: ***Rhonda Hunt*** *Phone:* ***(309) 677-2810***
Practice: ***Bright Futures***

Program Description

Bright Futures is a multi-district collaboration among 13 rural school districts in Peoria County and Bradley University. Bright Futures offers quality research-based parental training and educational programming for preschool children and their families. The Administrative Agent is Roger Bergia, Superintendent, District #325, Peoria Heights. School Districts include Illini Bluffs, Dunlap, Brimfield, Peoria Heights, Pleasant Hill, Bartonville, Oak Grove, Monroe, Pleasant Valley, Chillicothe, Farmington, Norwood and Elmwood.

The center-based pre-kindergarten classroom serves 196 "at risk" children. Classes are held at 11 sites throughout rural Peoria County four days each week for 2-1/2 hours per session. Home visitation, GED and literacy classes, parental education, classroom volunteering, and referrals are strategies for family involvement.

A model ISBE parental training program, the Bright Futures Family Education Project, covers educational needs of the 0-5 population. Special programs, parent-child home visits, newsletters and training opportunities are offered through this project which serves 600 families. The Parent Teacher Resource Center is housed on Bradley's campus which features developmentally appropriate demonstration materials, resource books, toy and book lending library, central staff offices and an inservice training area.

Description of Practice

Pre-K Classroom/Family Involvement

Bright Futures consists of a variety of educational components including parent education, volunteer programs, ongoing family assessment and referrals, home visitations, and community collaboration.

Individualized Parent Education Plans (IPEP) are completed by the parent and Bright Futures staff in order to assess any needs expressed by the parent and to assist parents and Bright Futures personnel in planning and possible referrals.

L.V.A./Project Upward provides a part-time outreach worker who recruits parents for GED or literacy programs. Illinois Central College provides GED classes on-site during Pre-K classroom hours.

Teachers have received intensive training on developmentally appropriate methods and materials which they share with parents during meetings and home visitations. An extensive toy lending and resource library is also available to parents and teachers at the Bright Futures Resource Center.

Bright Futures encourages family involvement through an active volunteers-in-the-classroom program. Job descriptions for each learning center area were developed in order to match parental/family interests with program needs.

Parental Training Project

The Bright Futures Family Education Project is an ISBE Parental Training Grant which is integrated with the Pre-K Program. Utilizing the same administrative structure at Bradley University of Bright Futures Pre-K Program, it extends and enhances family involvement of both at-risk and general population of families with children 0-5.

The Bright Future Family Education Project was responsible for creating and placing a collection of parent resources and toy lending libraries in each of seven rural Peoria County libraries.

Five issues of the newsletter, "Parent Talk" are mailed to 700 households in Peoria County. Topics in the newsletter include child development, child abuse and neglect, language development, baby care, child safety, health and nutrition, television viewing, and day care. Also included is a community calendar of events.

Ten series of parenting classes have been held at various locations throughout the county during the past two years. Topics include building self-esteem, communication, and cooperation, discipline, play, television monitoring, and nutrition.

Two Parent Network groups have been formed in the Chillicothe and Glasford areas. This year, home

visitation for children 0-3 has been initiated by the Family Education Project.

Personnel Involvement

The Program Coordinator oversees the administration of the Pre-K Program, the Family Education Project and the Resource Center. The Parent Coordinator provides family crisis management and serves as a liaison to community agencies and as a resource to Pre-K teachers and the Family Education Project. The Pre-K teachers and teacher aides are committed to facilitating education and growth for families, including parental programming and home visitation. The Family Educator conducts 0-3 home visitations, develops the newsletter Parent Talk, and supervises Parent Outreach Workers. The Parent Outreach Worker recruits families and plans, publicizes and coordinates parent meetings and network groups. The Program Consultant provides training and support for teachers and outreach workers.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Summative and formative evaluations are continuous and ongoing. Each year, parents evaluate all areas of Pre-K and Family Programs through confidential evaluation forms. Pre-tests and post-tests results from a Denver Development Screening instrument indicate that 60% of Pre-K students eliminated all delay areas, 85% reduced the number of delays, and 78% were functioning at appropriate age levels, thus "normalizing" the population served. Through longitudinal data gathered on children enrolled in 1988, the first year of Bright Futures operation, retention levels have been reduced by 50%. A pre-test/post-test was administered to 189 parents admitted to the Family Education Project. Results suggest that enrolled parents were helped in the areas including the following: amount of arguing at home, improvement of discipline methods, use of reading materials, developmental play time, and the importance of providing a stimulating environment. A Parent Advisory Committee also assists the Family Education Project in assessing program relevancy and effectiveness.

Transportability

The strategies employed in this practice could be successfully instituted by districts in Illinois, either as a single district or multi-district program. Several factors will influence a successful implementation:

- High degree of commitment of administration and staff to early childhood education and critical role parents play in learning (Epstein 1984);
- Genuine willingness of staff and parents to engage in a partnership in order to meet educational objectives;
- Creation of linkages with existing agencies/programs to extend services to the rural setting (maximum 40-mile radius from urban center);
- Sharing of resources among cooperating school districts. (If the program is multi-district, de-emphasizing one's "turf" through outreach and collaboration.)

Many programs across the state have already visited the Bright Futures program and are using our family involvement practices. The program offerings can be used within a traditional Pre-K at-risk program. The effectiveness and desirability of linking Pre-K and Parental Training programs can be demonstrated in the positive educational outcomes observed in Bright Futures parents.

Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***National Lekotek Center***
Address: ***2100 Ridge Ave., Evanston, IL 60201***
Contact Person: ***Ginger Maloney*** ***Phone:*** ***(708) 328-0001***
Practice: ***Lekotek***

Description of Program

The National Lekotek Center was founded in Evanston, Illinois in 1980 on the fundamental belief that every child should have the opportunity to reach his or her potential as a valued member of society. The mission of Lekotek is to facilitate the integration of children with disabilities into the family and the family into the mainstream of community life. As a community resource center, Lekotek provides supportive services for both parents and professionals. Nationwide, over 5,000 children with diagnosed disabilities of developmental delay, at-risk, failure to thrive, Down Syndrome, sensory impairments, severe/profound cognitive disorders, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and chronic medical conditions are seen yearly.

Description of Practice

PLAY SESSIONS: The monthly play session is designed to emphasize the creative use of toys and play materials while promoting interactive play between all members of the family. Toys are carefully selected to encourage the child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. The primary goal is the child's enjoyment of the toys and the parent's enjoyment of the child.

PRESCHOOL MAINSTREAMING: Parents who wish to integrate their children into regular preschool programs receive consultation services, which includes training for the preschool staff and support for the family's goals.

COMPUPLAY: Using computers and adapted equipment, COMPUPLAY allows children to learn and play with computer programs. Parents can receive training, participate in sessions with their child, borrow computers and software, or receive resource advice for home use.

FAMILY RESOURCES: Parents may borrow books and videos designed to provide information for adults and children. Families may borrow toys without participating in monthly play sessions.

Home visits are provided to those families who have children who are chronically ill. In rural areas, services are provided primarily in the home. Regularly scheduled inservice programs are provided to give parents information about the law, community resources and disabilities.

Integrated play groups, co-sponsored by Family Focus, provide children an opportunity to play and socialize with typically developing children. Every two months families receive a newsletter filled with interesting information about child development, disabilities, resources, toys, computer programs and upcoming events. Families participate in holiday parties, picnics, theater parties, and community events.

Personnel Involvement

KEY PERSONNEL: The Associate Executive Director of the National Lekotek Center supervises the delivery of all direct services to children and families. Lekotek Leaders model interactive play techniques for parents and children utilizing toys preselected to meet the special needs of the child. The Leader is also expected to provide support services to families. The Mainstreaming/Special Needs Training Coordinator is responsible for the design, development and implementation of day care and preschool training and for consultation with parents and programs on mainstreaming and integration issues. The COMPUPLAY Coordinator is responsible for the development and implementation of COMPUPLAY services. She also coordinates COMPUPLAY classes, drop-in services and the computer loan program.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Lekotek's programs are assessed on a qualitative basis through program evaluations, parent satisfaction surveys, program needs assessments and workshop/inservice evaluation forms. In 1987, Northwestern University researcher Bonnie E. Litowitz, Ph.D. found that parents were pleased with the mainstreaming program and felt their children had reached the goals they had set for them.

In 1990, a Program Evaluation Survey was sent to families. The responses indicated that although they enjoyed the toys, their real satisfaction came from

the unique quality of the service. All areas of the service received positive comments.

Transportability

Lekoteks are designed to provide service as conveniently as possible to the families who are to be involved. There are Lekotek Centers serving rural, suburban and inner city populations. Lekoteks are housed in school district buildings, special recreation facilities, inner city high schools, specialized schools, United Cerebral Palsy Centers, Easter Seals organizations, and free-standing nonprofit organizations in communities. The 50 Lekotek sites and 20 COMPUPLAY sites demonstrate the feasibility of replication of these services. The twenty-three sites in the State of Illinois receive partial funding from the Department of Rehabilitation. The remaining funding is received from private foundations and organizations interested in children with disabilities.

Practice Area: ***Family Involvement***
Agency: ***Hamilton County CUSD #10***
Address: ***109 North Washington, McLeansboro, IL 62859***
Contact Person: ***Penny Lee*** ***Phone:*** ***(618) 643-2328, Ext. 160***
Practice: ***The Family Resource Center***

Description of Program

The Family Resource Center is housed in a home that is next door to the Hamilton County Pre-School facility. The program components are an expansion and integration of services with the existing pre-school center. The Family Resource Center was developed on the premise that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children. Traditional approaches to education have frequently lacked the family link of parents and children learning together. The Family Resource Center came into existence in 1989 and targets parents with children from birth through kindergarten enrollment. During this 1991-92 program year, 372 parents have received services to date. This service model provides a strong curriculum involving both parents and community as true partners in the educational process.

Description of Practice

The Family Resource Center has helped to centralize the district-wide emphasis on the partnership of families with school programs for the entire community. The Family Resource Center offers learning materials for both parents and children through books, tapes, videos, handouts relating to early childhood issues and concerns, resources, and toy lending, among others. The delivery of the instructional components and services is coordinated by the district staff at the Family Resource Center. Coordination is the key to the implementation of this model because of the extensive networking and community resources and agency linkage for the comprehensive training approaches involved. All of the services presently being offered are free of charge to the parents of Hamilton County Unit District #10. Child care is provided without charge to participating parents, and transportation can be provided, or costs reimbursed, when families meet financial qualifying criteria for such provisions. A listing of the instructional components and services presently offered by the Family Resource Center follows:

1. A Parental Recruitment Process
2. "Baby TALK"
3. Postnatal Care
4. Prenatal Education/Prepared Child Birth Classes
5. Counseling/Support Group Sessions
6. Resource Lending Library
7. Vocational Counseling
8. Parental Education Components
9. Advisory/Parental Meetings
10. Service Coordination
11. Adult Education Linkages
12. Health/Nutrition Guidelines and Programs
13. Referral/Transition Assistance
14. Family Focused Goals
15. Intergenerational Groups
16. Transportation

Personnel Involvement

The Family Resource Center is staffed by individuals who understand child development and recognize and provide for the children's and parents' needs. The quality of key personnel involved is a top priority.

Hamilton County Pre-School Administrator — The Pre-School Administrator's role has been extended to be extended to facilitate the components of this parental training program. The program administrator initiates the contacts and agreements for the parental recruitment process, conducts staff training, coordinates interagency service delivery, schedules inservice to insure quality program implementation, evaluates staff according to the district's guidelines, as well as being responsible for the record keeping, financial management, relevant research and proposal development.

Family Resource Coordinator — This position is full time with the responsibility of coordinating the instruction components and activities of the program.

Child Developmentalists — These persons have broad experiences in working with children and parents. The positions are contractual and to date have been filled by certified teachers who are working in the Pre-School Center.

Parent Program Support Staff — The pre-school program employs a clerical person who works part-time with the parent training program. This position involves direct contact with families.

Subcontracting — This occurs with the Lutheran Child and Family Service agency allowing access to personnel with degrees in social work and experience with counseling.

Community Resources and Agencies which have been located to extend the present level of operation of the Family Resource Center are felt to be of quality and significance.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Both formative and summative evaluation procedures are used to evaluate the Family Resource Center parental training programs. A data collection process has been established to provide statistics on the number of referrals received, the origin of referrals, number of family contacts completed, number of participants in each training component, attendance rates and the specific services offered and delivered. Evaluation tools include group profiles, results of preschool screening, observation records, and questionnaires for parent, staff and agencies. Participants in the various program components are asked to complete an evaluation in regard to the effectiveness of the components.

Data is compiled and monthly progress is analyzed in relationship to objectives and timelines of the program. Records of monthly expenditures and specific training components are compiled and compared for cost-effectiveness based on the number of families served. Ineffective procedures are revised as needed.

Transportability

The Family Resource Center is a practice that would work in other areas of the state. Some conditions that are necessary for this practice to be adapted to another area are listed below:

- Having access to a building or space in a building that houses early intervention programs is very important so that there can be the interaction between the services.

- The qualification requirements of the Family Resource Center staff members can be somewhat flexible. Rather than being so rigid about certificates held, filling the specific roles can be the focus.

- To establish a Family Resource Center in a public school district, there must be an attitude of the entire school staff from top to bottom of wanting the parents involved in school programs. There must also be an acceptance in the community and by the parents of the school's role in family-focused interventions.

- Cooperation is required from community resources and agencies outside the school system for a successful networking program practice to occur.

1991-1992 SEMI-FINALISTS

Practice Area:	**Family Involvement — Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood**
Agency:	**Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood**
Address:	**1235 Oak Street Winnetka, IL 60093**
Contact Person:	**Blakely Bundy**
Phone:	**(708) 441-9001**

The Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood is committed to the healthy growth and development of young children from birth to age eight. The Alliance acts as an advocate for children, offering organizations and adults in parental, professional, or volunteer roles the resources and support needed to best meet the developmental needs of children. Its Board of Directors includes parents and professionals representing Winnetka's child care centers; preschools; public, private, and parochial schools; and several community agencies and organizations with an interest in young children. The Alliance provides services for both parents and professionals, which currently include a quarterly newsletter; a weekly program on cable TV featuring area child development experts; a video library conveniently housed at a commercial video store, which makes videotapes on child development, parenting, and early childhood education available free of charge; referral services; parenting courses; and networking opportunities for Winnetka's early childhood professionals.

Practice Area:	**Family Involvement — Summer Bridge Program**
Agency:	**Crystal Lake School District #47**
Address:	**South School 601 Golf Road Crystal Lake, IL 60014**
Contact Person:	**Jeaninne Linder**
Phone:	**(815) 477-6968**

The Summer Bridge Program is a summer transition program designed to address the needs of children two and one-half through five years of age and their families, new to the Crystal Lake Early Childhood Special Education Program. The program is identified by three main components: (1) home visits by the child's future teacher; (2) parent-to-parent friendship system; and (3) planned whole-group activities for all children and their families. The Summer Bridge Program is unique in that it is a family-focused, home-based program in which all new eligible students and their families may participate. All activities are selected by each family and services are flexible, given the input by each family.

Practice Area:	**Family Involvement — New Parent Program**
Agency:	**Macomb Community Unit School District #185**
Address:	**424 W. Piper Street Macomb, IL 61455**
Contact Person:	**Sally Sallee**
Phone:	**(309) 833-2871**

The New Parent Program is a series of parent education and support groups held in Macomb, Colchester, Industry, and Northwestern school districts providing comprehensive parent education. New Parent is offered free of charge to parents who are expecting their first child or have children aged 0-3. Parents meet in the local school libraries, and child activity centers are held in the pre-k and kindergarten classrooms. The following services are provided: home visits; New Parent Program series (a six-week series of educational and support meetings); child activity centers; alternative delivery model for teen parents; individual counseling and referral; lending library; workshops; reunions; 24-hour phone lines; and newsletters.

Practice Area:	**Family Involvement — Ottawa Developmental Special Education Preschool**
Agency:	**Ottawa Elementary School District #141**
Address:	**1709 North Columbus Ottawa, IL 61350**
Contact Person:	**Mary Volkman**
Phone:	**(815) 434-0726**

The Ottawa Special Education Preschool provides a parent involvement plan that focuses not only on the parents' participation in the classroom and/or attendance at parent meetings, but primarily relies upon consistent and open communication between home and school. The following activities are provided: notebooks, activity sheets, Highlights of the Month notices, Read to Your Child Program, informational handouts, parent input forms, thank you notes, pictures, parent/teacher conferences, phone calls, resource file of information, parent library, and parent participation.

Practice Area:	**Family Involvement — Early Start**
Agency:	**Springfield Public School District #186**
Address:	**Dodds School** **2630 South Whittier** **Springfield, IL 62704**
Contact Person:	**Dana F. Kinley**
Phone:	**(217) 525-3163**

Early Start is a half-day, school-based program which promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of three- and four-year-old at-risk children. In addition, the program helps parents to understand the needs of their children and enhance their parenting skills. Early Start operates throughout the school year and is located at two sites, The Early Start Center at Dodds School and Withrow Early Childhood Center.

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APPENDIX A

List of Experts Who Participated in the Evaluation

Exemplary Practices in Early Childhood Education in Illinois

Many thanks to all parents and professionals who participated on various evaluation levels.

Instrument Reviewers

Sandra Crews	ISBE, Springfield, IL	Candace Percansky	Chicago, IL
Joni McDonald	Macomb, IL	Pamela Reising	ISBE, Springfield, IL
Jeff Peterson	Mt. Prospect, IL	Char Ward	Macomb, IL

Panel Reviewers 1990-1991

Pam Benion	Des Plaines, IL	Carole Levine	Evanston, IL
Cathy Bolser	Danville, IL	Janice Miller	LaGrange, IL
Maddie Davis	Des Plaines, IL	Joni McDonald	Macomb, IL
Barb Fink	Danville, IL	Susan Nell	Edwardsville, IL
Barbara Grace	Carbondale, IL	Jeff Peterson	Mt. Prospect, IL
Jill Hardwick	Champaign, IL	Barbara Roberts	Norris City, IL
Kay Henderson	Macomb, IL	Jill Tatz	Vernon Hills, IL
Bonnie Kay	Carpentersville, IL	Barbara Waller	Geneva, IL

Panel Reviewers 1991-1992

Cathy Bolser	Danville, IL	Laurie Kiesewetter	Elgin, IL
Janean Cooper	Edwardsville, IL	Maury Lyon	Galesburg, IL
Lu Doty	Elmhurst, IL	Linda Martin	Hoopston, IL
Bev Gulley	Carbondale, IL	Sue Mussatt	Springfield, IL
Jill Hardwick	Champaign, IL	Sue Walter	Highland, IL
Judy Harris Helm	Brimfield, IL	Carol Weishiet	Normal, IL
Bonnie Kay	Barrington, IL		

Site Reviewers 1990-1991

Bernadette Alber	Carpentersville, IL	Lynn Moore	Lombard, IL
Sandra Bernstein	Evanston, IL	Jeanne Morris	Normal, IL
Sharon Bevins	Champaign, IL	Jeanette McCollum	Champaign, IL
Nancy Carlson	Chicago, IL	Donna Nylander	Flossmoor, IL
Rebecca Cook	Tuscola, IL	Helen Shapira	Champaign, IL
Carolyn Cooper	Charleston, IL	Nancy Spejcher	Lombard, IL
Felicia Gooler	Champaign, IL	Winnie Stariha	Chicago, IL
Noelle Greathouse	Charleston, IL	Char Ward	Macomb, IL
Linda Ladmer	Champaign, IL		

Site Reviewers 1991-1992

Lisa Bantle	Chatham, IL	Jeanne Morris	Normal, IL
Eileen Borgia	Chatham, IL	Janice Miller	LaGrange, IL
Nancy Brown	Darien, IL	Michelle Newbold	Normal, IL
Noelle Greathouse	Charleston, IL	Diane Ross	Schaumburg, IL
Sandy Heins	Bloomington, IL	Sandy Taenzer	Schaumburg, IL
Kay Henderson	Springfield, IL	Sue Walter	Highland, IL

WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE CHALLENGE AND THE VISION

VISION STATEMENT

As we approach the 21st century, there is broad-based agreement that the education we provide for our children will determine America's future role in the community of nations, the character of our society, and the quality of our individual lives. Thus, education has become the most important responsibility of our nation and our state, with an imperative for bold new directions and renewed commitments.

To meet the global challenges this responsibility presents, the State of Illinois will provide the leadership necessary to guarantee access to a system of high-quality public education. This system will develop in all students the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that will enable all residents to lead productive and fulfilling lives in a complex and changing society. All students will be provided appropriate and adequate opportunities to learn to:

- communicate with words, numbers, visual images, symbols and sounds;
- think analytically and creatively, and be able to solve problems to meet personal, social and academic needs;
- develop physical and emotional well-being;
- contribute as citizens in local, state, national and global communities;
- work independently and cooperatively in groups;
- understand and appreciate the diversity of our world and the interdependence of its peoples;
- contribute to the economic well-being of society; and
- continue to learn throughout their lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

The State Board of Education believes that the current educational system is not meeting the needs of the people of Illinois. Substantial change is needed to fulfill this responsibility. The State Board of Education will provide the leadership necessary to begin this process of change by committing to the following goals.

ILLINOIS GOALS

1. Each Illinois public school student will exhibit mastery of the learner outcomes defined in the State Goals for Learning, demonstrate the ability to solve problems and perform tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills, and be prepared to succeed in our diverse society and the global work force.

2. All people of Illinois will be literate, lifelong learners who are knowledgeable about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and able to contribute to the social and economic well-being of our diverse, global society.

3. All Illinois public school students will be served by an education delivery system which focuses on student outcomes; promotes maximum flexibility for shared decision making at the local level; and has an accountability process which includes rewards, interventions and assistance for schools.

4. All Illinois public school students will have access to schools and classrooms with highly qualified and effective professionals who ensure that students achieve high levels of learning.

5. All Illinois public school students will attend schools which effectively use technology as a resource to support student learning and improve operational efficiency.

6. All Illinois public school students will attend schools which actively develop the support, involvement and commitment of their community by the establishment of partnerships and/or linkages to ensure the success of all students.

7. Every Illinois public school student will attend a school that is supported by an adequate, equitable, stable and predictable system of finance.

8. Each child in Illinois will receive the support services necessary to enter the public school system ready to learn and progress successfully through school. The public school system will serve as a leader in collaborative efforts among private and public agencies so that comprehensive and coordinated health, human and social services reach children and their families.

Developed by citizens of Illinois through a process supported by the Governor, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Business Roundtable. Adopted as a centerpiece for school improvement efforts.

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